



Jordan Times

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Iran denies links to Turkish violence

NICOSIA (R) — Iran Friday denied Turkish allegations that it was linked to political murders in Turkey and voiced hopes that relations between the two countries would not be harmed. The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted a Foreign Ministry statement as denying "allegations levelled against Iran by the Turkish Interior Minister Ismet Sezgin." Iran "hopes that Tehran-Ankara ties will follow their normal and growing trend away from political propaganda hue and cry," the statement said. Mr. Sezgin announced Thursday that 19 members of an Iranian-linked Islamic fundamentalist group had been arrested on charges of murdering two Turkish writers and an Iranian dissident. He said the group was trained in sabotage and assassination techniques in Iran and three of its leaders were believed to have taken refuge there. An Iranian opposition group said a special unit of the Iranian armed forces had the task of "exporting fundamentalism to Turkey." The Mujahedd-e-Khalq, in a statement sent to the media, said killings in Turkey were carried out in coordination with corps 5000 of the special Qods force and the Iranian intelligence service.

Ramadan leaves for home

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan left Amman for home Friday after an overnight stopover. His Majesty King Hussein received Mr. Ramadan at the Royal Court on Thursday and reviewed with him the latest developments in the region and the international arena and bilateral relations. The audience was attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki, the under-secretary of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry and the Iraqi ambassador in Amman, Mr. Ramadan, who arrived in Amman from Algiers en route to Baghdad, said his country was still hopeful that the U.S. administration would respond positively to Iraq's recent initiatives. Following his meeting with the King, Mr. Ramadan told reporters that his country was still awaiting an American response and that "it is a mistake to abort any development and say things did not change."

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Hussein heads for talks in Romania

AMMAN (Petra) — The head of the steering committee of the Palestinian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks, Faisal Al Hussein, left Amman for Bucharest Friday on a several-day visit to Romania. Mr. Hussein told Petra he would meet with senior Romanian officials for talks on Palestinian-Romanian relations and Romania's role in the Middle East peace process. Mr. Hussein said he would brief the Romanian officials on dangers inherent in Israel's rejection of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which calls on the Jewish state to return home the nearly 400 Palestinians it expelled from their homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in December. His visit to Romania, he said, falls within the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) policy aiming at gathering international support for the expellees' cause.

Ban enforcement reaches 16,000 ships

MANAMA (R) — U.S. and other Western naval forces have intercepted 16,000 ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf since the United Nations imposed economic sanctions against Iraq in August, 1990, the U.S. Navy said in a statement Friday. The statement by the U.S. naval forces central command said the Cyprus-flagged container ship Boecklenburg had been stopped in the Red Sea on Feb. 2 while sailing from Port Said, Egypt to Aden. It said USS Capodanno had allowed the ship to continue its trip after "the inspection team determined that the vessel's cargo was in compliance with United Nations resolutions."

Iran 'encouraged' by Arab messages

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Friday he was encouraged by recent friendly messages from Gulf Arab neighbours following months of strained relations across the oil-rich Gulf region. "Gulf Arab leaders in their messages indicate they are willing to cooperate and befriend Islamic Iran. We warmly shake their hands hoping this trend will continue," he said in a Friday prayer sermon in Tehran. "We hope we are able, with their help, to preserve the security of the Gulf which is important for the world as well," Mr. Rafsanjani added.

Djibouti gets new cabinet

DIJIBOUTI (R) — Djibouti's President Hassan Gouled Aptidon has announced a new 18-man cabinet in the wake of the first ever multi-party polls held in December. The cabinet announced late Thursday is closely balanced between Mr. Gouled's politically dominant Somali clan and the Afars, whose tribal forces have been in revolt since November 1991. Afars took eight posts including foreign affairs, which went to Muhammad Bolok Abdou, and the economy and commerce portfolio which went to Muhammad Ali Muhammad. But former Interior Minister Ahmad Bulahe Barre, an Issa who has opposed compromise with the Afar rebels, moved to the defence ministry. Former Foreign Minister Moumin Bahdon Farah, a prominent Issa, received the important justice and religious affairs post.

Mobutu aide slams 'Western pressure'

BRUSSELS (R) — A special adviser to Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko said Friday reciprocal measures would be taken if the country's three biggest donor nations increased diplomatic pressure on Mr. Mobutu to relinquish power. Nganda Nzambo told Reuters in Brussels that if Belgium, France and the United States chose, among other options, to expel Zaire's ambassadors, Mobutu would be forced to take action. "We will take reciprocal measures if the three countries expel our ambassadors. These are normal diplomatic rules," Mr. Nzambo said. Belgium, France and the United States sent a stern message to Mr. Mobutu earlier this week saying they "forcefully insist" he surrender his powers to Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi.

Evictees reject Israeli list of 101, insist on return home of all 396

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (Agencies) — Palestinian expellees in South Lebanon refused Friday to take back an Israeli list of the 101 men the Jewish State has agreed to take back. They again said all or none of the 396 men would return.

A Lebanese driver in a black Mercedes brought the list to their tent camp in from Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in south Lebanon.

The driver tried to give two envelopes, one containing the names and the other a letter, to the leaders of the camp. But the Palestinians refused to take the envelopes and the driver drove back to Israeli lines at Zahraya. "No-one touched the envelopes," said Mahmoud Al Zahar, an expellee leader. "We told him 'Go back to those who sent you and tell them we refuse to receive them.'"

The driver, Ahmad Abu Samam, told Reuters Israeli soldiers had asked him to give the envelopes to the Palestinians. The soldiers had removed mines and a sand barricade from the road to the camp before he drove through.

He said he was told the 101 could return Sunday.

Evictee spokesman Aziz Dweik said sending the list was "a conspiracy against every one of us and if I do (take the letters) I would be a collaborator with my enemy."

He described the Israeli move as a game that "undermines our intellect and intelligence."

The evictees, stranded between Israeli and Lebanese lines since Dec. 17, had already rejected an Israeli offer to take back 100 of them and cut the term of exile for the others.

After a sermon at Friday prayers, each one of them took an oath not to return unless Israel allows them all back.

Raising their right arms, they chanted after their leader, Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi: "I pledged to God that I will abide by the order of the group and if my name is among the 100 I will not return unless all the brothers return with me."

Dr. Rantisi said the Red Cross would not be allowed into the camp to meet the 101 expellees.

The Israeli offer was intended to clear the way for Middle East peace talks to resume. The United States asserted it made further action against Israel at the United Nations unnecessary.

The evictees urged Arab countries not to bow to U.S. pressure and to boycott any talks with Israel.

The impasse was expected to complicate the mission of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is due in the region later this month to try to reopen the peace talks despite the furor over the expulsions (see page 2).

Defence ministry spokesman Odeh Ben-Ami said earlier that Israeli list of 101 expellees was to be delivered by the Red Cross.

Claude Volitat, a spokesman for the Red Cross in Geneva, confirmed receiving the list but said the organisation had not been asked to trans-

port them. "Obviously we will not evacuate people against their will," Mr. Volitat said. "There is still a way to go before these Palestinians might come home."

Mr. Ben-Ami said the men were to be brought back to Israeli jails or detention centres for interrogation and then "the decision will be made on what will be the next step regarding them."

Israel has said that many are likely to be imprisoned. Mr. Ben-Ami said the list includes 66 men from the occupied West Bank and 35 from the Gaza Strip. He said that five were hospitalised in the South Lebanon town of Marjayoun and that eight others were identified by the Red Cross as needing treatment.

Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian peace delegation, told reporters that "the Israeli decision does not address the illegality of the deportations."

She added: "We expect all of them to be brought back, not just part of them."

Dr. Ashrawi was to leave for Washington Saturday for talks with Clinton administration officials on the expulsions and calls for resumption of the peace process.

The Israeli public strongly supported the expulsions and polls published Friday showed opposition to the decision to allow some to return. A telephone survey of 505 people for the Yedioth Ahronoth daily showed 61 per cent opposed, with 36 per cent in favour and the rest undecided. A poll of 592 Israelis for the

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Christopher consults Mideast leaders ahead of regional trip

AMMAN (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher discussed the plight of Palestinian expellees and the Middle East peace process with Jordan's top officials, a government source said Friday.

The source, quoted by Reuters, declined to give further details, but said Mr. Christopher telephoned the "Jordanian leadership" Thursday as part of a flurry of contacts with officials in the region before his first visit to the Middle East later this month (see page 2).

Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon has angered Arabs and further complicated the 15-month-old Middle East peace process which Mr. Christopher is trying to unlock.

The Arabs have rejected an Israeli offer welcomed by the United States to take back 101 of

the expellees and reduce their terms in exile.

They insist on implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which demands Israel take back all the men banished to Lebanon on Dec. 17.

Reports from Washington said Mr. Christopher spoke on the telephone with His Majesty King Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, foreign ministers Farouk Shaara of Syria, Amr Musa of Egypt and Prince Saud of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon and Faisal Hussein, a leading Palestinian. He also spoke with Israeli leaders.

All the leaders, including Mr. Hussein, reaffirmed their commitment to the peace process "and the importance of getting back to the negotiating table," a senior U.S. official said at a briefing under rules that shielded

his identity. But Riyad Mansour, the deputy observer for the Palestine Liberation Organisation at the United Nations, told the Associated Press the Palestinians would not attend negotiations until the expulsion issue is settled.

Mr. Christopher's main obstacle is Palestinian resentment over the deal he cut this week with Israel to avert a U.N. Security Council debate over the Dec. 17 expulsion.

Israel agreed in a compromise to repatriate about 100 Palestinians immediately and the rest by the end of the year. But the Palestinians want the council to take up their demand for sanctions against Israel.

In the meantime, regional talks on such issues as refugees, weapons build-ups and the en-

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'Abu Shakoush' hits, claim third fatality

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The known fatalities in attacks attributed to a criminal(s) nicknamed "Abu Shakoush" (hammerman) rose to three with the death Thursday of an elderly shopkeeper in Jabal Hussein.

The latest attack appeared to strengthen police theories that there were more than one man involved in the series of robberies since mid-September in which a blunt instrument, most probably a hammer, was used.

An autopsy carried out on the body of the latest victim, Suleiman Farhan Shahatit, 68, has established that he died of massive skull injuries inflicted by a heavy metallic instrument — again, most probably a medium-sized hammer.

Shahatit, a retired government official and a notable from the Dababneh Christian tribe of Salt, was attacked in his electrical appliances shop in Jabal Hussein. He was buried Friday.

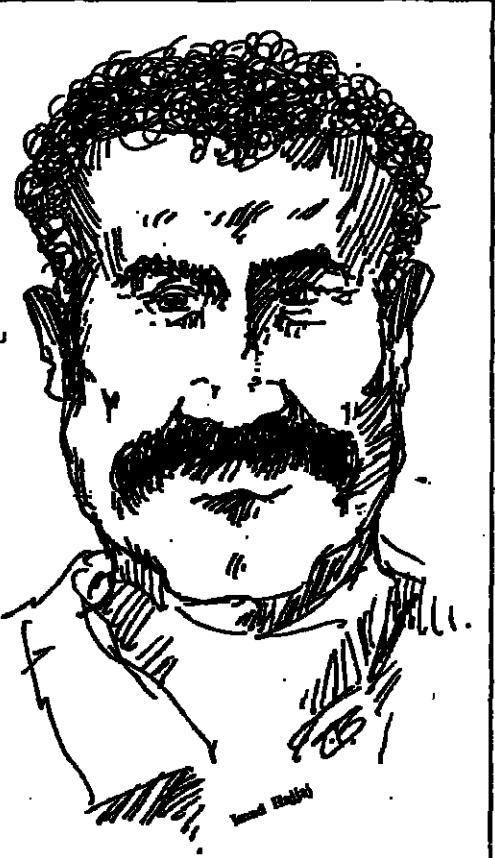
In the absence of an eyewitness to the attack — as the case was in all "Abu Shakoush" robberies — circumstantial evidence is the only clue that police have at this point.

It suggests that Shahatit had bled to death by the time employees found him lying in pool of blood and raised an alarm. The body was moved to the University of Jordan hospital.

Medical sources said Shahatit was hit three times in the back of the head.

"Death could have been instantaneous or in a few minutes after the attack, with a blunt instrument which could have been a hammer," said one source, adding that Shahatit died sometime between 9 and 10 a.m.

Circumstantial evidence indicated that the assailant appeared to have used the same modus operandi as the attacks attributed to "Abu Sha-



An artist's rendition of a suspect in at least three attacks attributed to 'Abu Shakoush'

koush" — the assailant asking to buy something from the shop and hitting the shopkeeper/attendant on the head when he turns his back; the wallets of the victims were missing but cash

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An Israeli soldier Friday arrests a Palestinian boy following a stone-throwing incident in Jerusalem's Old City (AFP photo)

Arafat leaves after talks on evictees, Arab reconciliation

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat left Amman Friday after urging the West to reconsider its stand vis-a-vis Iraq and Libya after returning from his second post-war meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in which he is believed to have discussed Arab reconciliation efforts.

"I advise that (the U.S.) open a dialogue with our brothers in Iraq and our brothers in Libya," said the PLO chairman shortly after a 90-minute meeting on Thursday with His Majesty King Hussein in which the two Arab leaders discussed ways and means to create framework for "reconciliation talks" between different pro- and anti-Iraq groups in the Arab World.

King Hussein and Mr. Arafat also discussed the future of the Middle East peace process in light of the crisis sparked by Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of nearly 400 Palestinians who remain stranded in South Lebanon.

High-ranking Jordanian officials, including Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki, Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and head of the Jordanian negotiating team to the peace talks Abdul Salam Majali were present during the discussions.

They were joined by PLO Executive Committee members Yasser Amer, Zuhdi Nashashibi and Bishop Elia Khoury as well as Tayeb Abdul Rahim, the Palestinian ambassador to Jordan, and head of the Palestinian steering committee to the peace talks Faisal Hussein.

Jordanian, Palestinian and other Arab officials and diplomats have said that a drive for Arab reconciliation was accelerated in the past weeks with the aim of convening an Arab summit.

The initial meeting may be at Foreign ministers level, and some countries, such as Saudi Arabia may send lower level delegations to begin

light of the crisis sparked by Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of nearly 400 Palestinians who remain stranded in South Lebanon. High-ranking Jordanian officials, including Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki, Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and head of the Jordanian negotiating team to the peace talks Abdul Salam Majali were present during the discussions.

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with," one Jordanian official told the Jordan Times.

"Mr. Arafat's visit is a part of a 'spin-off' effort that began with (Moroccan) King Hassan's unsuccessful tour of the region in 1992," said the official on condition of anonymity.

In Cairo, where he arrived later Friday, Mr. Arafat held talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the expulsion crisis and Middle East peace talks, officials said.

Mr. Arafat had held consultations with King Hussein before leaving for Baghdad Monday and was believed to have taken messages from several Arab countries to the Iraqi president.

Egypt, which has been blamed by Iraqi officials as having been the prime instigator in the Arab ranks in favour of the war against Iraq, is now involved in Arab reconciliation efforts, Jordan-based Arab diplomats say.

Mr. Arafat, speaking Thursday to the press on his way to a meeting with Amman-based Palestine National Council (PNC) members, would not

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Israelis kill 5, injure 26 in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli troops shot dead five Palestinians and wounded 26 others in the occupied Gaza Strip on Friday, Palestinian sources and Israeli military officials said.

A military source said three of the dead were in Bureij refugee camp.

"This afternoon an army force on routine operation in Bureij saw a car with armed terrorists in it. The force initiated an attack on the car," the official said.

"There were five armed terrorists in the car. As a result of the army fire three of them were killed. Two were caught unharmed," she said. The official did not give the names of the dead but said they did not open fire on the Israeli troops.

Palestinian sources said clashes erupted throughout the Gaza Strip as word of the killing of the three men spread.

They said troops shot dead Khalil Abu Etaiwi, 14, in clashes with thousands of demonstrators in Nasserat refugee camp and shot dead Said Jishy, 20, during confrontations in Rafah.

Troops shot and wounded 25 Palestinians in Rafah, Bureij, Nasserat, and Khan Yunis, the Palestinian sources said.

They said the Nasserat clashes erupted when residents of the camp, opposite Bureij, saw soldiers kicking the bodies of the three dead men.

Israeli military officials said three assault rifles and ammunition were found in the car in which the three men were shot dead.

Palestinian sources said the men in the car were members of the Fatah Hawks, a group affiliated with the mainstream faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Israelis have killed 1,008 Palestinians since the start of a Palestinian revolt against Israeli occupation in December 1987.

Israel expelled 415 alleged Islamic fundamentalist activists on Dec. 17 after six soldiers were killed in attacks claimed by Hamas.

Arab stand on crisis forces delay of multilateral talks

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The decision by Washington to postpone the next round of multilateral Middle East peace talks was taken last week when it became clear that none of the main Arab participants would attend the talks.

The talks were scheduled to be held in Rome, Washington, Oslo, Geneva and Tokyo on the environment, arms control, water, refugees and economic issues respectively.

While Jordan and the Palestinians attended the two sessions of the five working groups, Syria and Lebanon totally stayed away. Israel selectively attended the talks, claiming it would not participate in any talks in which Palestine National Council (PNC) members were participating on behalf of the Palestinians.

U.S. President Bill Clinton announced Thursday that his Secretary of State Warren Christopher would visit the Middle East in the third week of this month.

Mr. Christopher announced the indefinite postponement of the multilateral talks after consulting with senior Jordanian, Palestinian, Syrian, Lebanese and Israeli officials.

While there has been no indication from Jordan, Syria and Lebanon that they would stay away from the bilateral phase of Arab-Israeli peace talks even if the issue of the expellees were not adequately addressed, concern over the issue remains.

The Palestinians have said that U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which calls for the re-

turn of all the expellees, must be fully implemented.

The U.N. and the Palestinians as well as most of the Arab World have said that Israel's offer to return 100 of the expellees is not adequate and partial implementation of Resolution 799 is not satisfactory.

Palestinian envoys scheduled to visit Washington this week are expected to brief the new U.S. administration of the Palestinian position.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi confirmed this weekend that she would be part of the group that travels to Washington to meet the State Department officials. A trip by Palestinian envoys has been delayed several times because of the expellee crisis.

Dr. Ashrawi has received a personal invitation to meet with Hillary Rodham Clinton, the wife of the U.S. president, the head of the Palestinian Women's Association told the Jordan Times. "Ashrawi" has received a personal invitation from Mrs. Clinton," said Issam Abdul Hadi, the expelled head of the Palestinian Women's Federation. The news, however, could not be confirmed from the American side.

Some Palestinian officials believe that an early diplomatic initiative by the Arab countries in general and the Palestinians in particular may help address what is seen as a pro-Israeli administration further towards a more evenhanded approach.

Israel Radio reported Thursday that Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres would visit Washington on Feb. 17.

U.N. approves troops for Iraq-Kuwait border area

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council on Friday approved sending a battalion of 750 soldiers and support staff to patrol the potentially explosive frontier between Iraq and Kuwait.

A resolution, adopted by a unanimous 15-0 vote, leaves open the possibility of more troops in the future. The measure was authorised under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which allows for the use of force in case of violations.

The document refrains from giving a precise number of troops but diplomats said that the United Nations would not dispatch three infantry battalions as recommended by Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

Instead, the plan is to send one battalion of about 750 armed soldiers plus support units to replace the 500 lightly or unarmed military observers authorised nearly two years ago. Currently about 353 observers are actually deployed.

The protest came one day after Marines shot dead a 13-year-old boy, and underlined the growing tensions between Somalis and U.S. forces that came here Dec. 9 on a humanitarian mission.

Friday's incident occurred at the main gate of Mogadishu's port. U.S. Marines called in reinforcements, including two amphibious assault vehicles, and fired shots in the air. No Somalis were hurt, but two Marines suffered minor injuries from flying rocks, said Marine Colonel Fred Peck, a U.S. military spokesman.

Col. Peck said as far as he knew, Friday's demonstration

near the port was not connected with Thursday's shooting of the 13-year-old boy. The boy was shot by a Marine who was afraid the teen-ager, who was running after a U.S. vehicle with a package in his hand, was going to throw a bomb. Col. Peck said.

According to Col. Peck's account, Friday's incident began after a sentry saw a wounded Somali man lying face down about 45 metres from the main gate of the port. A group of Somali youngsters, apparently thinking the man was shot by American troops, threw stones to drive back military police who tried to help.

The man, brought to the gate in a wheelbarrow by his father and brother, was dead on arrival at a U.S. army hospital.

The youths, meanwhile, had begun erecting tire barricades and throwing more rocks.

Christopher trip seen to stress U.S. commitment to peace

USIA Staff Correspondents

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton is sending Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Middle East to jump-start the peace process, the White House said Thursday.

Stressing the historic opportunity to bring serenity to an area torn by generations of bloodshed, Mr. Clinton offered his hand as a "full partner" to those who seek reconciliation, but he warned that those who try to subvert the peace process through violence "will find no tolerance" for their strategy.

In a written statement, Mr. Clinton drew attention to the fact that the Middle East trip will be Mr. Christopher's first overseas mission, calling that an indication of the "high priority" the president places on peace efforts in the region. Mr. Clinton said the mission conforms with his pledge during the presidential campaign to "maintain continuity in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations."

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Mr. Christopher will meet with all the "major parties to the peace process" while he is in the region. The secretary is scheduled to leave Washington on Feb. 17 and will conclude his swing through the Middle East on Feb. 24, Mr. Boucher said.

Mr. Clinton said Mr. Christopher's mission "presents an opportunity for the parties to focus their energies on the formidable challenge of achieving peace in a strife-torn region."

In a world beset by violence, the president said, "it is striking that in the Middle East a process of direct negotiations has begun. Israel, all its Arab neighbors and the Palestinians have been engaged in a common endeavor to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338."

Mr. Clinton recalled that Washington and Moscow, as co-sponsors of the 1991 Madrid Conference, "played a critical role" in "launching these negotiations," also emphasizing his intention to see the United



Warren Christopher

States "continue that role." "We cannot impose a solution on the Middle East," he said. "Only the leaders of the region can make peace."

Acknowledging that the opportunity for a solution "can slip away too easily," Mr. Clinton asserted, "those who oppose the process, who seek to subvert it through violence and intimidation, will find no tolerance here for their methods."

Mr. Clinton's statement made no reference to one early obstacle to resuming direct talks — Israel's deportation to Lebanon of some 400 Palestinians it considers terrorists.

Israel has accepted a compromise plan calling for immediate return of 100 of the deportees and return of all by the end of 1992, but the Palestinians have said they will not participate in peace talks until all of the deportees are re-admitted to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

White House Communications Director George Stephanopoulos told questioners that Mr. Christopher's role will be to "do what he can to get the peace process re-invigorated, to get it started, get it moving." Responding to the suggestion that U.S. support for

the compromise, which calls for a phased return of the Palestinians, reflects a "tilt" towards Israel, Mr. Stephanopoulos acknowledged that Washington "has always had a special relationship with Israel, but we want to make sure...the peace process is working as well as it can."

Earlier, White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers told reporters that Mr. Clinton believes Tel Aviv's "decision to return 100 of the deportees and to work toward repatriating all of them will allow the peace process to go forward."

The announcement of Mr. Christopher's trip came just one day after the United States and Russia, co-sponsors of the peace process, decided to postpone a series of five multilateral working group meetings that originally had been slated to begin early next week. Those meetings will be rescheduled, but Washington and Moscow have not yet decided on new dates for them, Boucher said.

Mr. Christopher told reporters rescheduling the multilateral talks "seemed to be the wise and judicious course under the circumstances." The United States is "taking steps to make sure the peace process stays on track," Mr. Christopher said during a photo opportunity before a luncheon for German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

Mr. Christopher said the process announced by Israel on Feb. 1 for dealing with the issue of Palestinian deportees is "going forward just about as predicted, and I think that we will see the resumption of the peace process at an early date."

"I'm not at all discouraged or disappointed by the reaction we've had," the secretary said. "I'm encouraged to think that we can get the peace process back on track at a very early time. And I want to emphasize that President Clinton and I are determined that this will happen," Mr. Christopher declared.

Mr. Boucher told reporters the secretary has been in touch with the parties to the peace process in recent days and they reiterated their "sustained commitment" to the process. "And it's on the basis of

that," he said, that Mr. Christopher will be going to the region to elicit views face-to-face with the parties and see "what we can do to help reinvigorate the process."

The spokesman reiterated the U.S. belief that extremists — groups like Hamas or Hizbollah or whoever else has tried to reject the peace process and tried to block it with violence — should not be allowed to succeed.

Many Palestinians associated with Hamas were among those deported by Israel in December, and some Palestinians have rejected the compromise plan, calling for the immediate return of 100 deportees and a reduction in sentences of the others so that all will return to Israel or the occupied territories by the end of the year. Appeals and reviews could speed the return of some under the process, and Israel has pledged to allow international organizations to deliver humanitarian relief to the deportees who have been stranded in southern Lebanon.

"We think it's a process that resolves the problem of the deportees," Mr. Boucher told questioners. "That process, we think, is a good one and that's why we think there's no necessity for further U.N. Security Council action."

The spokesman declined to characterize individual responses that U.S. officials have received from Palestinians, Arab governments, Security Council members and other governments around the world. But he emphasized that "we're finding in our exchanges...broad acknowledgement of the importance of avoiding counter-productive confrontation at the United Nations and...of the need for the parties to advance their core national interests by making progress in the Middle East peace talks."

Following his trip to the Middle East, Mr. Christopher is expected to travel to Western Europe, making more than one stop, a senior U.S. official said later in the day. While in Western Europe, the secretary is expected to meet with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

Friends and family defend Arab-Americans held in Israel

CHICAGO (AP) — Defenders of two Palestinian Americans jailed in Israel for suspicion of helping "terrorists" say the two are apolitical, hard-working family men whose detentions should provoke U.S. outrage.

Mohammad Jarad, 36, a Chicago grocer, and Mohammad Salah, 39, a suburban used car salesman, are longtime U.S. citizens who spent their 11th day jailed Friday with no access to lawyers or family and no charges filed against them.

Israeli officials say they have evidence Mr. Jarad and Mr. Salah were helping the Islamic group Hamas rebuild and finance operations against Israelis after Hamas leaders were expelled to Lebanon.

Families of both are adamant the accusations are false.

"My husband is not involved in anything that gets into the political — either overseas or in America," Mrs. Jarad said. She spoke Thursday from Washington, where she met with State Department officials, lawmakers and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

"My husband is a model citizen...he's a family man, a hard-working man...he's not the kind of man they are making him to be."

Abdullah Salah, a computer worker and a nephew of Mohammad Salah, said he was disappointed the United States had not done more to help its citizens.

"If this were a different country, I would hear a lot more outrage. Most of the outrage you hear is from the Palestinian community."

Mr. Jarad's wife, Amal, said because the detainees are Palestinian-born, Americans

have attached less importance to the case.

Senator Paul Simon of Illinois has been working to ensure the Illinois men get a fair hearing. But under Israeli military law, they may be denied consultation with attorneys and family until they are released.

The State Department has kept the family briefed, and a consular officer has visited the men.

A third U.S. citizen, who lives in the West Bank, was arrested several days before the Chicago-area men on similar accusations. He still is being held.

"We are extremely concerned," said Mohammad Kaiseruddin, an engineering consultant in Chicago and past president of the mosque where Mr. Jarad prays.

He and others took their concerns to Israel's consulate in Chicago on Tuesday.

Mr. Jarad has six children, ages one through 14. His family says he went to the West Bank, where his mother and grandmother live, in mid-January to settle the affairs of his father, who died 11 months ago.

Mr. Salah, who also was visiting relatives, has lived in the United States for 23 years, Mr. Jarad said.

Rafeeq Jaber, spokesman for the Muslim Foundation of Chicago, the Bridgeview Mosque where Mr. Salah prays, said the two are "honest people, hard-working, decent." Bridgeview is about 20 kilometers southwest of downtown Chicago.

Mr. Salah is a father of three children, ages one through six. He was a grocer in Chicago for 15 years before selling his store last year and taking up used car sales, his nephew said.



Arab-American Mohammad Hajja, one of the three detained in Israel, is taken to a military court Thursday (AFP photo)

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

600 dead in Algerian clashes in one year

ALGIERS (AP) — Six hundred people have been killed in violence in Algeria since a state of emergency was declared last Feb. 9, the head of a state-run human rights organization said Thursday. Kamel Rezzag-Bara, president of the National Observatory for Human Rights, said the 250 members of the country's security forces, targeted by Islamic extremists, were among those killed. He did not break down the remaining deaths. But 132 official APS news agency, citing official sources, said that 132 would leave 218 dead among armed extremists carrying out attacks on police and soldiers to avenge the aborted election victory of the Islamic Salvation Front. The Muslim fundamentalist party was poised to win parliamentary elections in January 1992, but the army stepped in to cancel the voting and install a five-man High State Council in power which banned the party.

Drought hits Moroccan agriculture

RABAT (AP) — A prolonged drought has left Morocco's reservoirs less than 30 per cent full, Public Works Minister Mohammed Kabbaj said Thursday. The country's 70 dams were only 28.4 per cent full, compared with 43.4 per cent a year ago, Mr. Kabbaj said. The drought has affected the country for the last 18 months. Mr. Kabbaj said the government would take a series of urgent measures against the water shortage, including importing grain to feed livestock and watering farmland that is not currently under irrigation. Only farmland not being irrigated is suffering from the lack of rain, he said. Some 850,000 hectares of crops are being irrigated as usual and not affected by the drought, Mr. Kabbaj said. Hydroelectric power and livestock raising are also suffering from the long dry stretch, he said. Moroccan farmers have been extended tax and other financial breaks until the year 2020 to cope with the drought and help achieve Morocco's goal of food self-sufficiency.

Relatives of British prisoners to visit Iraq

LONDON (AP) — Relatives of two Britons held prisoner in Iraq will leave for Baghdad this weekend in hopes of visiting them, the families said. Michael Wainwright, 42, and Paul Ride, 33, have been imprisoned separately in the Iraqi capital for several months. The family members have been granted visas, but it was not immediately clear whether Iraqi authorities would allow the visits to go ahead. Mr. Wainwright's mother, Iris, and his sister, Heather Horne, will travel with Mr. Ride's wife, Julie, and their young son, William, on a British Red Cross flight to Jordan Sunday, family members said. They will drive from there to the Iraqi capital. "If we get to meet (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein we will just make a plea for our Michael," Mrs. Horne said. "It will just be great to meet up with him again after 18 months. I want to ask him some questions — we don't know much about how he came to be arrested." She added, "we are taking all sorts of food out with us, nothing fresh, all things that will keep. We have been given books, clothing and toiletries which we will be passing on to Michael." Mr. Wainwright, of Sowerby Bridge in West Yorkshire, northeast England, is serving a 10-year term. He was arrested in May after crossing from Turkey into northern Iraq while on a cycling trip to Australia. Mr. Ride, a chef from London who had been working in Kuwait, was sentenced to seven years after his arrest at the border in August. London has pressured Baghdad to release the men, arguing that their imprisonment is unjust.

Senate authorizes U.S. role in Somalia

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. Senate voted Thursday to formally authorize the dispatch of more than 20,000 U.S. troops to Somalia two months after their landing there to help feed food to starving Somalis. The authority and implied approval were given in a joint resolution sponsored by two party leaders, Democrat George Mitchell and Republican Bob Dole, and 31 other senators and approved by voice vote without debate. It said the president should seek to ensure that other United Nations forces remained in Somalia so American troops could hand over to a U.N.-led force as soon as possible. Former President George Bush sent the U.S. troops to Somalia on Dec. 8 while Congress was adjourned. The Senate said President Bill Clinton should make every effort to ensure that American troops serving as part of a U.N.-led force in Somalia were permitted to take all reasonable measures to protect themselves. It called for an administration review of U.S. goals in Somalia and policies on commitment of troops into combat situations and as part of an international peacekeeping force.

Iranians puzzled by Western 'misunderstanding'

By Yousef Azme
Reuter

TEHRAN — Many Iranians are puzzled and angry with the West. They say it is misreading even their country's attempts at reconciliation.

"Whatever we say or do is interpreted in the worst possible light," said one highly-placed Iranian.

Their latest grievance is Western reaction to comments by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, widely seen in Iran as conciliatory but interpreted abroad as uncompromising, especially on British author Salman Rushdie.

Mr. Rafsanjani told a news conference earlier this week that no one could repeal the fatwa in which the late Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini said Mr. Rushdie should die for blasphemy.

"If a religious alem (scholar) announces a fatwa, it cannot be changed," he said, trying to explain that in Islamic jurisprudence a fatwa can be altered only by the person who pronounced it in the first place.

On Thursday the British government held its first meeting

with Mr. Rushdie to express support for the author.

"In the face of recent statements by senior figures in Iran, we thought it right to demonstrate publicly our support for Mr. Rushdie's fundamental rights," a Foreign Office spokesman said in London.

Ordinary Iranians, senior officials and Western diplomats in Tehran were puzzled by the British reaction and said Mr. Rafsanjani was in fact making a discreet attempt to distance the government from the Ayatollah's fatwa.

Western diplomats in Tehran said they had repeatedly explained to their governments that since Ayatollah Khomeini died in 1989 there was no hope of altering his pronouncement.

"Another Iranian or other Muslim religious authority could issue an opposing opinion but this would only be binding on his own followers," one diplomat said. The diplomats and officials said Mr. Rafsanjani even risked angering radical Khomeini followers by appearing to distance the government from the fatwa, which Iranian leaders had regularly endorsed ever since it was issued in February 1989.

"It is such a hot potato. No one in Iran can be seen to oppose



Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani

anything that Khomeini stood for," the diplomat said.

Mr. Rafsanjani also distanced the government from a seminar on the Rushdie affair due to be held this month by a religious foundation in Tehran.

Diplomats and officials said Mr. Rafsanjani took a soft approach at the two-and-a-half-hour news conference Sunday at the start of celebrations marking the 14th anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution on Feb. 11, 1979.

Although he did not offer any concessions, he steered clear of past rhetoric that had, for exam-

ple, virtually ruled out dialogue with Washington — the "great Satan" as Ayatollah Khomeini used to call the United States.

Mr. Rafsanjani said it was up to Washington to make the first move to normalise American-Iranian relations.

He said a goodwill signal from Washington might be unfreezing Iranian assets held in the United States since the revolution and estimated to be worth up to \$13 billion.

The president, a pragmatist who has worked hard to lead Tehran out of isolation, said an improvement in U.S.-Iranian relations did not appear possible for now because Washington remained hostile.

Radicals who claim to be the true heirs of the father of the Iranian revolution were not happy. "It is the green light to America," said a disgruntled radical.

Iranian officials and Western diplomats were surprised when U.S. and other Western media interpreted this line as a hardline rejection of dialogue with Washington.

"This is quite a specific feeler. His comments were not headline. They were not anti-Western," said a senior Western diplomat.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 ... Les Aventures de L'espace
18:30 ... Envoyé Spécial
19:00 ... News in French
19:15 ... Feteur our
19:30 ... News in Hebrew
20:00 ... News in Arabic
20:30 ... America's Funnest Home Videos
21:00 ... Perspectives
21:30 ... Science Workshop
22:00 ... News in English
22:30 ... Feature film: "The Great Los Angeles Earthquake" (Part 1)

PRAYER TIMES
05:43 ... Fajr
06:22 ... Sunrise
11:50 ... Dhuhri
14:50 ... Asr
17:17 ... Maghrib
18:36 ... Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedfish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 62735

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624591
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 67440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 62051, Tel. 620543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775251
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 665328
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811258
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623924, 65932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 678991

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Another rise in temperatures will take place and winds will be north-westerly light to moderate. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy and winds will be northerly moderate seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 12/21

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Farouq Noor 706680
Dr. Salah Al-Ussoud 690728
Dr. Bajaj Bader 947362
Dr. Hisham Kanan 702026
Fire pharmacy 661912
Fordons pharmacy 770336
Al Asana pharmacy 637055
Nairoub pharmacy 636072
Al Solani pharmacy 646945
Yacoub pharmacy 637060
Shmeisani pharmacy 647632
Najih pharmacy 647632

AMMAN:
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896780
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 767111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 1010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

AL Quds Pharmacy (-)
Dr. Zaid Ju'cinn (-)
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896780
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 767111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 1010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/2
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 642910
Alkhalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jahat Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 635945
Al-Musader Hospital 667271/9
The Islamic, Abdali 664127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664166/6
Iskani, Al-Muhajreh 771013
Al-Basir, J. Ashrafieh 771112/6
Army, Marika 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 602240/50
ZARQA:
Zarqa Gov. Hospital (19)983323

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)3200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
09:15 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
09:15 Doha (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
11:30 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:50 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
11:30 Sudan (IY)
17:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)
19:00 Dubai, Damascus, (EM)
19:25 Rome, Beirut (AZ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:05 Larnaca (CY)

MARKET PRICES
Up/down price in fbs per kg.

Apple	700/500
Banana	700/700
Banana (Mukammal)	600/640
Beans	650/450
Carrot	160/100
Cauliflower	250/180
Cucumbers (large)	150/80
Cucumbers (small)	300/250
Eggplant	320/220
Garlic	650/550
Grapefruit	180/120
Lemon	270/200
Marrow (large)	200/100
Marrow (small)	440/380
Mint	150/80
Onion (dry)	400/160
Onion (green)	240/180
Orange	400/160
Pepper (hot)	380/280
Pepper (sweet)	180/120
Potato	220/200
Tomato	130/60
Spinach	240/180

34 projects get HCST support

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) Thursday decided to support 34 projects in research and development studies. At a meeting chaired by HCST Chairman His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the council decided on the 34 projects as follows: nine agricultural, nine industrial, six energy, five health sciences and medical technology, and five environment sector projects. Also, during 1993, the HCST will support 12 institutions including the University of Jordan, Yarmouk and Mutah universities and the University of Science and Technology, as well as the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), the National Centre of Agricultural Research and Transfer of Technology (NCARTT), the



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan

Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMO), the Antiquities Department, the Royal Medical Services, the Vocational Training Corporation and the University of Jordan Hospital.

Buyers seek British pound, but sellers holding tight

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The sterling pound seems to have gone underground in Jordan following the steady decline of the British currency in the past four months.

"There is high demand for sterling pounds in cash, but no one is selling," said a foreign exchange dealer. "Those who have pounds seem to prefer to hold on to the currency with hopes of getting their losses while speculators think this is the right time to buy."

The sterling pound, once the strongest in Europe, took the latest plunge when the British government balked at joining the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) four months ago.

Commercial banks were selling limited amounts of pounds Thursday at the official rates set by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ). Some of them reported their stocks had completely run out by closing time Thursday.

Banks and moneychangers said, although the pound does not figure anywhere near the American dollar as far as turnovers in dealings in Jordan, there was always a minimum amount freely available in the market. This

seems to have vanished from the market, they said.

Moneychangers also reported a run on the pound but said they expected the situation to clear next week.

"Our main customers (for pounds) are travellers to London, and there was a good number of them in the last month," said one dealer. "We have been unable to replenish our reserves of pounds even to the minimum level."

"We had trouble raising even 2,000 pounds to meet the requirement of a much-valued client on Thursday," said another exchanger.

"We are now asking our clients to give us at least three or four days notice on their needs for pounds."

"People are no longer selling pounds since they bought them at higher prices," he added. "Perhaps the situation may change next week if there was to be a further slump in the value of the pounds in the international market."

The exchanger's hopes were shared by the chief dealer at one of Amman's leading commercial banks.

"If the pound goes down again when markets reopen Monday, you can expect to see a good quantity of pounds flushed out of

the mattresses in Amman," he said.

The CBJ-set official price for the currency on Thursday was JD 9968 (buying) and 1,0018 (selling) — the lowest in over six years — compared with JD1.18 and JD 1.19 in September/October 1992.

"Speculators who have been holding on to the pounds in the past months were hoping that there would be an upturn sooner or later," said the bank dealer.

"From the look of things last week and this week, it seems that they are still hopeful," he added. "The moment of decision could come if the pound suffers again."

But, he added, if indeed the currency was to inch up in Europe next week then "not all the hoarded pounds would come out in the local market."

"There would still be many who would hope that the rise would continue and they could cut their losses further."

Reports from London said the pound had crept up a little in the international market Friday in the wake of stabilisation measures adopted by the French monetary authorities.

But the rise was not enough to signal any definite trend yet, dealers in Amman said.

What international news agencies say about Jordan's centrists

Theirs is an 'uphill' battle

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan's centrist political parties, despite links to the power elite, face an uphill battle against well-organised Islamist groups on the road to November multi-party elections.

"It is true we (centrists) are parties that are only months old compared to those who have been working for years," said Zaid Hamzeh, head of the Nationalist Justice and Progress Party.

"But it is our duty to go at full speed towards elections and we are not worried by the number (of seats) we get."

Centrist and nationalist groups from seven of 11 parties which have been legalised since October when Jordan lifted a ban imposed on all groups in 1957 after leftist, influenced by Egyptian-style socialism, tried to topple the regime.

The ban excluded the Muslim Brotherhood movement which was allowed to operate freely as a charity to counter leftists.

The Brotherhood, with access to a huge network of mosques to spread its ideas, became the largest single block in parliament in the 1989 elections in which all candidates stood as individuals. It was the first ballot of any kind in 22 years.

Their attempts to move Jordan to a stricter Islamic state including calls for a ban on alcohol, have alarmed liberals in Jordan which has managed



Taher Al Masri

to balance the needs of a diverse population of pro-Westerners, tribal conservatives and Islamists.

Most centrist party leaders are former government officials using their powers of patronage and blood ties to lure a silent majority of non-politicised Jordanians satisfied with King Hussein's 40-year rule through Middle East unrest.

Their programmes are almost identical — protecting Jordan's democratic reforms and public freedoms, improving social services and keeping a stable Jordan under a monarchy. Most also support Arab-Israeli peace talks, long opposed by the Islamists.

If properly managed, most officials believe they could mobilise mainstream Jordanians to help curb the rising influence of Islamic activism,



Marwan Dudin

growing on worsening standards of life and banking on popular despair over the still futile peace talks.

But they say their ability to move quickly is being hindered by lack of expertise, money and practical programmes.

Most have not yet managed to break away from being more than elitist political salons centred around a personality cult, further helping them to stay weak and scattered.

Despite this, their leaders are confident they are making inroads, as they try to feel their way in a modern but conservative society where many people still vote along tribal lines.

"I am very optimistic our party will have some deputies in the next parliament," said Mihem Al-Khreisla, head of the Jordan National Alliance Party, a mainstream centrist group.



Zaid Hamzeh

Notables from main tribes in rural southern and central Jordan founded the party which has attracted hundreds of Christians, Muslims and members of minority groups like the Chechens and Circassians, originally from the former Soviet Union.

"We started off in remote areas of the Kingdom where we feel we were needed, and slowly we will move towards the main cities," said 48-year-old Khreisla, a former governor of Balqa who comes from Jordan's leading Bani Sakhr tribe which has over 70,000 members.

Under the new law, any prospective party is banned from having foreign organisational and financial links. It should accept the king and the constitution, and recognise

Islam as the state religion.

Three other older groups, pro-Iraqi Baathists, Communists and a former PLO faction, also authorised after managing to maintain power bases despite the ban, will hardly have a chance to boost their growth and play an effective role in the ballot.

They have been stripped of support by the fall of Soviet power and disillusioned by the repression of Baathist governments in Syria and Iraq.

Many newer groups are trying to form coalitions to broaden their support.

"All of them are aware it is their paramount duty to take part in Jordan's political life and to get citizens to come to vote," said Marwan Dudin, one of many leading Jordanian politicians trying to encourage formation of a broad-based centrist alliance.

"There is nothing that is anti-Islamic in the approach of these moderate political groups. It is only the need to think liberally and to put Jordan's interest before anything else."

The group, after painstaking mediation, managed to cut to five from 18 the number of small mainstream parties.

Former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri, a Jordanian of Palestinian origin who wields considerable power among many of his compatriots who make up at least half of Jordan's population, is also working on forming a broad liberal alliance. He is banking on respected leftists and newer liberal groups.



Jordanian and Yemeni representatives of ministries of housing and urban development Thursday discussed Jordan's preparedness to assist Yemen with housing plans

Jordanian expertise to meet Yemen's needs in housing

AMMAN (Petra) — Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) Director General Yousef Hiyasat Thursday said Jordan will meet Yemen's needs for technicians and engineers, to help implement the country's housing and development plans.

At a meeting with a visiting Yemeni delegation from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Dr. Hiyasat said the corporation is in continuous contact with its Yemeni counterparts to exchange experiences and provide assistance.

He said the HUDC prepared to brief Yemeni housing and urban development officials on the Jordanian experience in the field.

Dr. Hiyasat reviewed the corporation's achievements since its establishment in 1966, saying that it had completed 100 projects at a total cost of JD 250 million. He said under these projects 3,000 housing units were built to

benefit some 200,000 citizens. Dr. Hiyasat said integrated housing complexes are being constructed to replace squatter, low-income housing units.

He said the objectives of the national housing strategy include the provision of proper, sufficient, and affordable housing units and the development of a programme to meet the needs of low-income citizens. Another objective is to use local materials and technologies in construction, to reduce costs, Dr. Hiyasat added.

He briefed the Yemeni delegation on the method of selecting new housing sites, including analytical studies of project sites to determine physical features, infrastructure services, the land use, availability of the local labour force, income level of potential residents, population density and the overall housing situation.

Evictees reject Israeli list of 101

(Continued from page 1)

daily Maarive indicated 54 per cent against, 37 per cent in favour and the rest undecided.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Friday that Cairo and Washington were working hard to reach an agreement with Israel to return all the expelled "within weeks" and to reactivate the stalled talks.

Mr. Musa said Israel's offer to return 100 evictees and cut exile terms of the rest was "a step in the right direction which has to be followed immediately by other steps to solve the problem by ensuring the full return of all deportees."

"The position of Egypt is that the deportation is an illegal act. The return of 100 is not a solution and can't be considered as a full implementation by Israel of Resolution 799," Mr. Musa told Reuters.

"We are working diligently to have this step followed by other steps," he said.

"Negotiations, talks and contacts continue between us and them (Israel and the United States) to have this problem resolved in a very quick time," he added.

Asked what was the time period set for a "quick return" of the expelled, he said: "We're talking about matters

of weeks."

Mr. Musa said the return of all 396 was "the solution" and there could be no compromise on that, but he said there were differences of opinion on the process for their return.

Mr. Musa said if the crisis was not resolved, it would "certainly have an adverse and negative impact on the climate and prospects of peace."

Mr. Musa said he talked with Mr. Christopher by telephone Thursday.

"The role of the United States is needed and the efforts of Mr. Christopher are also needed to defuse the tension," Mr. Musa said.

Lebanon's government-run National News Agency said Mr. Christopher conferred by telephone with Prime Minister Hariri on Thursday.

"Premier Hariri stressed that Lebanon's policy regarding the deportees won't change and it insists on implementation of Security Council Resolution 799," the agency said.

As for the peace talks, "Lebanon will participate only if all the Arab parties participate."

The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) said Mr. Christopher called Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa to advise him that he wished to visit Syria during the Feb. 17-24 trip to the region.

Mr. Sharaa, the agency said, expressed to the U.S. secretary of state "his deep concern over Israel's refusal to implement Resolution 799 that called for the repatriation of the expelled."

"The Security Council resolutions are not subject to any compromise," Mr. Sharaa said, according to the agency.

In Amman, Information Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif, when asked what he thought of the trip, replied: "We have to wait and see what proposals Mr. Christopher is carrying with him."

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was sharply critical of the American government's attitude to the Palestinian expelled in an interview with an Italian magazine.

"Believe me, I was surprised when I heard that the (U.S.) administration refused to take any action against Israel to implement Resolution 799," Mr. Arafat told Mondo Economico magazine in the interview released in Rome Friday.

"We must ask if there is one standard or double standards for United Nations resolutions. The United States pushed all the countries of the world to recognise Israel, but not Palestine," Mr. Arafat added.

Tax office collects JD 36 m last month

AMMAN (Petra) — The Income Tax Department collected JD 36,276,285 in January 1993, according to Director General Mansour Haddadin.

Mr. Haddadin said this figure represents an increase of JD 4,089,261 or 15.6 per cent over January 1992 figures.

He praised the citizens who presented their income statements to the department and called on those who have not to do so soon in order to benefit from the discount incentives offered by the department. The department offers a six per cent discount to those who pay their taxes in January, and a four per cent discount to those settling in February.

Mr. Haddadin said citizens who can not present their statements to the department during February, because of their financial situations, may make a partial payment, in order to benefit from the discount, provided that the balance owed is paid no later than the end of April.

Arab women from U.S. display their artwork

AMMAN (J.T.) — An exhibition of paintings by four Arab women artists from the United States opens Saturday Feb. 6 at 6 p.m. at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery.

The exhibition includes oils on paper by California-based Ghada Jamal, who presents three series, inspired by the Gulf war. Helen Khal, who has been exhibiting since 1960, presents delicate oils and attempts, as she puts it, "to make colour an oasis for the emotions."

Afay Zurayk's collection of mixed media paintings on paper could easily be labelled "Dream Doors," the title of one of her poems, which concludes: "Paintings became passages. And I became a dream."

Suha Nowra's nostalgic oils depict Jordanian landscapes painted in her studio in Maryland. "My work" she explains, "aspires to arrive at an emotive impression... a free line and vibrant colours."

The gallery's new, temporary location is opposite the Iraqi embassy, between the First and Second Circles in Jabal Amman.

Labour group says Arabs failed to use resources properly

AMMAN (Petra) — Following the second meeting Thursday between the Ministry of Labour and the Arab Labour Organisation (ALO), ALO Director General Bakr Mahmoud Rasoul said the Arabs have failed to improve their economic performance because of their failure to distribute roles and share wealth.

"Had Arabs properly used their resources they would have been able to achieve food and economic security, and could have achieved qualitative progress," Mr. Rasoul said.

He said it is necessary to translate the resolutions adopted at the various Arab meetings, symposia and conference into action, rather than shelving them.

Mr. Rasoul is currently on a visit to Jordan to prepare for the 20th session of the Arab Labour Conference, scheduled for April in Amman.

He said the conference agenda includes issues such as working women and their role in development, the role of women in Islam and their status in Arab Legislation, the Arab strategy for recruitment and integration of the Arab labour force.

In addition, the integration of the disabled and their employment in jobs suitable to their capabilities, the working environ-

ment, occupational health and safety, and freedom of labour in the Arab World, are also part of the conference agenda.

Mr. Rasoul said the conference is important because it is being convened at a time when the world is dominated by economic factors.

He said countries, including Arab nations are focusing on pushing the wheel of economic progress forward.

The Arab World has abundant economic resources, but they are not utilised properly, Mr. Rasoul said.

He said that out of 1,500 million hectares of arable land, only 50 million hectares are being exploited.

There are 250 million Arab people capable of contributing towards the advancement of their countries, Mr. Rasoul added.

Ministry of Labour Secretary General Saleh Tarawneh and Mr. Rasoul Thursday signed minutes of the meeting between the Ministry and the ALO.

Mr. Tarawneh thanked the ALO for its ongoing efforts to develop joint Arab action, particularly in the labour sector.

He said he hoped that the organisation's efforts will yield positive and effective results

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Tubeishat visits geographic centre

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat visited Thursday the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC). Dr. Tubeishat met with RJGC Director Uqla Al Duhamat and was briefed on the centre's duties. The minister toured the centre's various sections and departments and was acquainted with its work.

Youth councils to meet in Beirut

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in the meetings of the Arab Ministers of Youth Council (AMYC) due to start Sunday in Beirut. Youth Minister Saleh Irshaidat who will head Jordan's delegation to the meetings said the council will discuss means of enhancing cooperation among Arab states in sports and youth-related fields. The council, Dr. Irshaidat said, will also work on preparing a joint Arab strategy in these fields. He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the agenda of the meetings includes discussing a report by the council's technical committee, Arab-African sports cooperation and issues related to organising several seminars and Arab sports championships. Jordan's delegation to the meetings will include Assistant Secretary General of the Ministry of Youth Munther Al Huneidi and Director of the youth minister's office Abdul Rahman Al Armouti.

Housing ministers to discuss population

AMMAN (Petra) — Arab ministers of housing will meet in Amman in April to discuss major population issues, programmes, and policies including population and the environment, population and development, family planning, and women in development. The conference is organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF). The conference will prepare for the U.N. Conference on Population and Development, due to be held in Cairo in 1994. Taking part in the Amman conference will be the LAS member states, and the U.N. member states who have diplomatic representation in Amman, as well as the U.N. agencies concerned.

Private, public sectors to exchange views

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Businessmen Association (JBA) will hold a seminar on Feb. 15 at the Plaza Hotel. Addressing the seminar will be the Minister of Planning, Ziad Fariz. Mr. Fariz will talk about the economic trends in Jordan during the next five years. The seminar is part of a series aimed at encouraging and promoting economic dialogue between the private and public sectors and exchanging views between decision makers and implementing bodies.

Finance industry workers plan meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — The General Secretariat of the Arab Federation of Workers in Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions held a meeting Thursday in Amman, under the chairmanship of federation Secretary General Saleh Qaliyyeh. Participants in the meeting reviewed resolutions issued by the federation's central council in Tunisia last July and the federation's working plans. They also discussed preparations for convening the 18th session of the central council of the International Banking Workers Federation in Damascus later this year.

Ghor's needy receive assistance

NORTH SHUNEH, Jordan Valley (Petra) — The North Shuneh Social Development Department has started distributing in-kind assistance to needy families in the North Shuneh district. A total of 1,816 families will benefit from this charity campaign.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.

★ Exhibition of watercolour paintings by Syrian artist Nazir Nab'ah at Baladina Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition of paintings by the late Syrian artist Alfred Hattal at Al Balqa Art Gallery in Fubeis city.

★ Exhibition of paintings by four Arab artists from the United States — Ghada Jamal, Helen Khal, Soha Nourssi and Afay Zurayk — at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery in Jabal Amman, between the First and Second Circles — opening ceremony at 6 p.m.

Jordan Times

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Sell out is untenable

U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton is right to resist mounting pressure for a sell out on his principles and ideals by accepting the Vance-Owens peace plan for former Yugoslavia. This blueprint for "peace in former Yugoslavia" is faulty not only because the plan rewards the aggression and atrocities of Serbia but also because it cements the division of the country on religious and ethnic grounds. In this time and age, subdividing states on the basis of race, colour, ethnic origin, religion or political ideology, is a flagrant violation of all contemporary norms on human rights. Both Vance and middleman Owens are clearly driven and motivated by the realities of the situation in former Yugoslavia despite the fact that such realities run counter to every basic norm under the international human rights instruments. The sense of pragmatism that appears to be dominating the thinking and standards of Vance and Owens in their joint approach to the conflict may be justified in the short term but cannot be acceptable in the long run because it contains the seeds for imminent disputes and even bloody conflicts in the future.

Clinton's open defiance of even the U.N. and its Secretary General Butros Ghali on this score is a demonstration of a vibrant stream of idealism and respect for human rights, both of which had been prominent features of his political platform as a candidate for president. This belief is reinforced by the fact that he and his team of advisors cannot see their government and country associated with a formula for resolving the conflicts in Bosnia and Croatia that does not confirm with some fundamental principles enshrined in the U.S. constitution. The new president appears to seek a departure from the course of expediency that often characterised the foreign policies of former U.S. presidents and in so doing he may wish to leave a new legacy for his leadership.

All democratically-oriented countries are duty-bound to extend open support for correct policies coming out of Washington on Bosnia and Croatia and to avoid isolating the U.S. on its rejection of the U.N. peace plan for the Balkan states.

The Middle East has had bitter experiences with dividing states on grounds that served colonialism and for rewarding aggression and self-aggrandisement in some other cases.

Bosnia and Croatia were recognised by the U.N. as independent countries in 1992 as multi-faith states. To entertain now other forms and basis for recognising these states, would be tantamount to repeating dangerous policies from the past and not learning from recent history.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily criticised the U.S. Secretary of State for his claim that Israel's bid to return only 100 of the 400 Palestinians deported to southern Lebanon was in compliance with Resolution 799. By supporting the Israeli stand, the United States is trying to circumvent the resolution and aims at helping Israel escape any sanctions that would be imposed on it by the council should it refuse to repatriate the Palestinians, the paper added. It is useful to remember that no Security Council resolution is subject to compromise, and either the resolutions are implemented in full or they are not, the paper added. It is regrettable to see France and Britain trying to submit another resolution, replacing 799, calling for the repatriation of the Palestinians but without imposing punishment on Israel, said the paper. It said that should the council adopt such a move, it would be a retreat from its own resolutions, while the process of repatriation could take months or years. The paper pointed out that such developments could lead the major powers to tamper with resolutions 242 and 338 as well and the idea of swapping land for peace. Similarly, the whole Middle East peace process could be subjected to such tampering, with the result that the region will remain in turmoil and state of violence. The paper said it goes without saying that the need now is to resist any tampering with Resolution 799, which must be implemented promptly and in full, lest the whole peace process should be aborted.

A COLUMNIST in AL RA'I daily offers a number of proposals to the Iraqi leadership so as to enable the Iraqi people to dispose of the sanctions and end Iraq's isolation from the Arab World. Fahed Al Fanek said that under the current difficult circumstances facing Iraq and its people, it would be useful for the Iraqis to become more realistic, objective and rational in dealing with the given facts, without ever abandoning their ideology. He proposed that Iraq introduce political pluralism and draw up plans for presidential and parliamentary elections to help achieve that goal to start shortly after the end of the sanctions. Iraq ought to make it officially clear to the Gulf states that it has no intention of ever occupying Kuwait, something which would defuse tension in the Gulf and remove one of the reasons behind the massing of Western forces against Iraq, said the writer. He also said Baghdad would do well to reiterate its intention of respecting the U.N. resolutions and the rules of the Arab League so as not to give any justification for any one or any nation to be hostile to Iraq. Should Iraq clearly declare its intention to open a new chapter in its relations with the West, by proving that in word and deed, said the writer, the public will be able to find an end to world enmity to the Iraqi people.

Iraqis yearn for stability, coexistence with West and Gulf neighbours

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

BAGHDAD — Walking down the large avenues of the once beautiful city of Baghdad one is overwhelmed by rows and rows of bare and colourless cement high rises, three-metre-tall portraits of Saddam Hussein and the drab grey sky.

Cars honk their horns, impoverished people scurry past each other and the soldiers sit on rooftops with their anti-aircraft guns tilted towards the sky. The old French balconies on the two-storey buildings, the elegant Egyptian style shutters and the baroque decor on the buildings have given way to huge concrete skyscrapers of grey, pale yellow and peach colours.

A good 80 per cent of the Iraqi women visible on the streets, whether wearing western or traditional dress, are still attired in black. According to official Iraqi figures, 10 per cent of all married women are war widows. The Ministry of Trade recently forwarded an application to the U.N. sanctions committee to import 215 boxes of black textile. The U.N. deferred taking a decision, asking for more clarification on the textiles' use.

The black clothes, the colourless skyscrapers and the multi-lane avenues are all part of modern Iraq. The Iraq that Saddam Hussein, the man from the central Iraqi town of Tikrit who claims he is a descendant of the Prophet Mohammad, has built.

Recent warnings and air attacks by members of the U.S.-led coalition have reinforced the threat that their embargo will continue until Saddam Hussein is gone. But after more than a decade of almost continuous warfare, internal rebellions and internationally-imposed economic sanctions, Saddam Hussein is still the unquestioned leader of Iraq.

"There are obvious contradictions in the policies of the West towards Iraq and Saddam Hussein," says Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, one of Iraq's foremost intellectuals and poet laureate.

"They (the West) make us into a military might by selling us every form of military hardware

available and the ingredients to make other weapons and then they come to destroy them," said Mr. Jabra speaking in his suburban home of the Mansour district in Baghdad.

"Then the West encourages a rebellion in the south and the north and fails to fully back it up — it is a false policy — a policy of hypocrisy," he says. He dismisses any pretension that the United States has humanitarian motives in its new world order policies as "ridiculous — it's the rule of the mongrels".

But Mr. Jabra's disdain of the West, which is shared by many Iraqi intellectuals who believe the West is hypocritical and self-serving, is not really shared by the government itself.

While bashing the new American Secretary of Defence Les Aspin, for an "arrogant and belligerent response" to the Iraqi initiative of offering a unilateral ceasefire, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz clearly indicated Iraq's willingness to make peace with the U.S.

"If the new administration shows any willingness to have a new relationship (with Iraq) ... that would be very much welcome," he told CNN television last week.

While Mr. Aziz is Saddam Hussein's personal mouthpiece to the West and thus can be seen as directly speaking on behalf of the Iraqi president, others in the Saddam Hussein cabinet are even more forthcoming than Mr. Aziz.

"We have no problem with U.S. interests in this region," said Taha Yassin Ramadan, one of the Baath Party senior leaders who also holds the post of vice president and sits on the Revolutionary Command Council, during a recent interview with the Jordanian daily newspaper Al Ra'i.

"The strategic interests of the U.S. and our interests in the region are hardly different — we both want stability," he said. While failing to address Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations, Mr. Ramadan was making overtures to the Saudi kingdom in no uncertain terms. "We want peaceful

coexistence with our Arab brothers in Saudi Arabia, we are as much concerned about regional security as anyone else," he added.

But this about face, which the current Iraqi leadership is evidently planning to implement, will need some reaction from the other parties and thus far there has been little sign of reciprocation by the U.S. and other Gulf Arab countries.

"We are waiting for a response from the U.S. leadership — in two or three months' time at the latest we hope that a new policy towards coexistence with Iraq will have been formed by the Clinton administration," said one of the leading lobbyists for lifting sanctions against Iraq, the minister of trade Mohammad Mehdi Saleh.

Iraqi officials are well aware of the recent attention that growing industrial and military power in Iran have been receiving in western think-tanks and the media. Hoping to capitalise on the West's traditional attempt to play the two Gulf giants off against one another, they hope the West will turn to Iraq once again to fend off the "Iranian threat".

"We know that the Russians were upset at the recent waves of attacks against us, mainly because they believe that it would be strategically unwise to weaken us further while Iran's power grows," said political science professor at the University of Baghdad Mahmoud Taha.

"We believe both the Americans and the Saudis are interested in keeping Iraq in check" and that has traditionally been done by strengthening us," Mr. Taha said.

While the issue of democracy and a liberalisation of the Iraqi political system was a main topic of conversation through much of the post-war period in which former Prime Minister Saadoun Hamadi, a liberal Baathist, directed at least some of the political events in Iraq, such topics appear to have been put on the back burner for now.

"We are not concerned with democracy right now," said the laureate poet Jabra. "We need a

ceasefire, then we need stability and then we can talk about political liberalisation," said the writer who, while not a member of the Baath Party, is in favour of the secular character of the Baathist regime.

But most Iraqis do not believe that democratisation or multi-party rule will be possible under Saddam Hussein's rule.

"This system is a one party system, and thus popular consensus does not come into the decision-making process," said an Iraqi scholar on condition of anonymity.

"We will not have democracy under this regime. There is no hope of that; but we do hope that there will be a ceasefire between Iraq and the West and maybe a lifting of the non-military sanctions," the scholar said hopefully.

Many Iraqis fear that a violent end to Saddam Hussein could mean internal upheavals which would divide the country. Worse still, many believe it could throw Iraq into a long period of civil strife pitting the more affluent and powerful Sunni Muslims and Christians against the impoverished Shiites in the south and the rebellious and independent-minded Kurds in the north.

"We need a strong ruler to keep Iraq together and a mechanism which will eventually allow for a stable transition from a totalitarian system to a more pluralistic system," an Iraqi observer said.

Any attempt to overthrow Saddam Hussein from within is dismissed as "an unrealistic option" by most Iraqis.

As Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani recently said when asked about ending the rule of the Iraqi president, "the Kurds fought him 10 years in the 1970s and eighties, the Iraqis fought him eight years, a 33-nation alliance sanctioned him and made war against him, the south and the north rose up against him and still he is there. Tell me: Just what do you want us to do? Let it be for now and let us accept that Saddam is for now the undisputed leader of the Iraqi people."

Experts call for direct U.S. role in peace process

By Rosalind Mandine Murphy

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher need to pursue a more direct and assertive role in the Middle East peace process in order to get the parties back to the negotiating table and on to a settlement, a panel of experts told the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee February 2.

The panelists discussed what direction U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East should take under the Clinton administration. The hearing was the second in a series on key foreign policy issues facing the United States. The committee is chaired by Representative Lee Hamilton (Democrat, Indiana).

The end of the cold war, the emergence of a coalition of Arab states who want to resolve the conflict with Israel, and the election of a Labour government in Israel have created an unprecedented opportunity for a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the panelists said. Many challenges remain, however, which call for a more active and direct U.S. role in the process, they said.

While the new administration has a "real opportunity" for moving the Arab-Israeli conflict towards a negotiated settlement, the immediate challenge is getting the parties back to the negotiating table, said William Quandt, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who served on the National Security Council staff under President Carter.

The present process "has not achieved substantive agreements, and it won't," Mr. Quandt said. The parties "want and need American leadership" as a mediator "to break the logjam, find areas of compromise and bridge the gaps," he said.

U.S. mediation would not take the place of the negotiations between the parties, but would offer a "supplementary track," he said. Kenneth Stein, associate professor of Near Eastern history at Emory University, and Lisa

Anderson, director of the Middle East Institute at Columbia University, stressed that the United States has an obligation to encourage human rights and democratic values in the Middle East.

The United States is "the key beacon for democracy and democratic values," Mr. Stein said. The United States, therefore, "has a moral commitment" to encourage these values in its foreign policy, he underscored.

Commenting on the changes brought on by the end of the cold war, Ms. Anderson said human rights records must now play a larger role in determining "friends and foes" in the region.

Both scholars noted a movement towards democratic values in the region — a trend the United States should encourage and support, they said. "There are experiments that have begun," Mr. Stein said. The United States should support these efforts of reform and encourage its allies in Europe and Japan to do the same, he added, noting that this support should include economic assistance.

Mr. Stein argued that there is a direct link between economic development in the region and the strength of Islamic fundamentalist groups. "It is in our interest to provide economic assistance," he said, as this will "take away the steam of recruitment of Islamic fundamentalist groups."

Ms. Anderson argued that elections are the only way to measure the claims of such opposition groups as the Islamic fundamentalists against their performance. Elections and increased press freedom would also open up an avenue for diverse voices to be heard in the Middle East, she said. "There is considerable liberal opinion in the Middle East, and it deserves a greater hearing," she said.

While there may be risks to encouraging democracy in the Middle East, the risks of not encouraging reform may be even greater, Ms. Anderson said. "If we don't encourage reform now, we will experience revolution later," she warned.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Implementation of 799 could give impetus to peace talks

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

Jordanian daily newspapers in the past week gave prominence to the expellees' problem, Israeli and American stands towards this issue, Iraq, and domestic affairs.

It seems that Israel and the United States have reached a formula for getting rid of the deportees' problem and avoiding the implementation of Security Council Resolution 799, said Al Ra'i daily.

Judging from the reports coming from Washington, the new secretary of state, Warren Christopher, plans to make a visit to the Middle East in the second half of this month in order to put the finishing touches to a new plot aimed at saving Israel from any sanctions for its defiance of the world community, said the daily.

There is no doubt, said the paper, that Mr. Christopher's coming visit to the region, which is being made under the pretext of stimulating the peace process, will give Israel further encouragement to pursue its atrocities.

Sawt Al Shaab daily said that the Israeli-American deal is a vicious attempt to skirt around Resolution 799. This deal is a conspiracy against peace, said the paper.

The deal, which envisages the return of only 100 of the deported Palestinians, was also attacked by Al Dustour daily. The paper said the deal, which Israel and the United States reached behind the back of the United Nations and its Security Council, forms a dangerous precedent regarding U.N. resolutions dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a cheap deal, it said, is also likely to damage the weak ground on which the Middle East peace talks stand and

international legitimacy, the paper added.

A columnist in Al Dustour said that the Palestinians can never accept the U.S.-Israeli compromise solution. Hamadeh Al Faraaneh said that the Palestinians can not agree with such a deal because it could open the way for the western powers to tamper with Resolution 242 in the same manner; the PLO can not compromise its position before the Palestinian masses by accepting such a humiliating deal.

Israel's disregard of Security Council Resolution 799 opens the door for the Jewish state to show its total rejection of any other resolution, including Resolution 242, said Abdul Rahim Omar in Al Ra'i daily.

The writer said that the United States is bound to provide continued cover for Israel's atrocities, through its veto at the Security Council, at a time when the Arab countries, which are deeply split at the moment, are doing nothing to influence the Security Council to take a drastic action in this regard.

Washington is facing a dilemma and should speed up efforts to end the problem of the expelled Palestinians as soon as possible, said Fakhri Saleh, a columnist in Al Dustour.

While the U.S. administration seems to be convinced of Israel's agreement that it can only return 100 Palestinians, it is afraid that the Security Council will be in an embarrassing situation should Washington veto any draft resolution imposing sanctions on Israel, said the writer. Therefore, the U.S. administration, he said, is working behind the scenes trying to find a compromise solution to the whole issue and avoid facing the Security Council.

vi, a columnist in Al Ra'i, the United States has no alternative but to bear its responsibility and force the Rabin government to take back the deported Palestinians, unless it can afford a confrontation at the Security Council. The writer said that the United States can not hope to resume the peace process unless it finds a way to settle this thorny issue, especially as Washington is facing a solid Arab stand, demanding that Resolution 799 be implemented in full.

Sultan Al Hattab, a columnist in Al Ra'i, blamed the Arab governments for failing to stand together in their demand that the Council implement its Resolution 799. The writer said that the Arab governments suffice themselves with issuing statements of condemnation or expressing anger at the Israeli practices and the U.S. backing of Israel's ill-treatment of the Arab citizens.

He said the Arab masses are charged with deep anger awaiting their regimes to do something against Israel's defiance and its continued aggression because the Arab regimes continue to show uncertainty and do nothing to safeguard Arab national rights and interests, said the paper.

The Arab Nation should not expect the Europeans or other nations to come to their aid, it added.

Taher Al Udwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that as long as the deportees' problem remains outstanding, the return of Arab parties to the negotiating table is infeasible; should it happen nevertheless, it would reflect the Arab countries' total capitulation.

The writer said that the Arab leadership should

state visiting the region this month trying to stimulate the so-called peace process.

He said that the Arab and the Palestinian leaders should remember that as they squabble with the United Nations and the United States over the fate of the expellees, the 400 deported men continue to face hardships.

Saleh Al Qallab, a columnist in Al Dustour, turned his attention to Iraq, noting that its relations with the new U.S. administration could be improving soon.

As indications of his prediction, the writer cited a recent statement by Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz as renouncing Baghdad's claims over Kuwait, a recent demand by the Gulf states that the United Nations adopt a single criterion with regard to Iraq and Israel, and recent calls in the United States demanding that the administration deal objectively with the Iraqi regime.

The writer said that as Iraq has implemented all the U.N. resolutions, it is a matter of time before we see a return to normal relations between Iraq, the United States and its western allies.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily that the Clinton administration started its mandate by pursuing the same policies adopted by Mr. Bush against the Iraqi people. He said that unless Mr. Clinton retreats from his position, Iraq, supported by the free world, should sue the United States before the International Court of Justice for its raids on Baghdad which killed innocent women and children.

The writer said that should Iraq remain subject to aggression, the Iraqi people, backed by the Arab masses, should revert to acts of violence anywhere around the world to take revenge for themselves and seek justice.

Salameh Ekour, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, blamed the

aggression on Iraq or supporting it. The writer said that the Iraqis have for the past three years suffered from aggression and continued sanctions which deprived the sick and the weak of drugs and food.

The writer said that thousands of children and sick people face death every day as a result of the continued sanctions while the Arab regimes remain passive, forgetting that Iraq had lost many men in their fight against the Israeli enemy in the 1967 and 1973 wars.

Salah Abdul Samad, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, discussed the employment of foreigners in Jordan, noting that the national airline, Royal Jordanian, has recently concluded contracts with 120 Irish hostesses, paying each \$1,000 a month.

The writer said that while RJ continues to pay even its senior staff and stewardesses monthly wages not exceeding \$300, it would be unwise and unfair to take this step, which, he said, violates the regulations of the Ministry of Labour.

A columnist in Al Dustour tackled the question of favouritism and nepotism in the employment of civil servants, a question which is being debated by Parliament. Taher Al Udwan said that most Lower House of Parliament members had, at one time or another, mediated and used their good offices to ensure the appointment of their relatives and their friends in government offices.

The deputies have been elected to do good service to all citizens and not just those relatives and friends, said the writer.

Indeed, it is the needy people who are in need of mediation nowadays to get employment and not the friends of the deputies, he said. He added that the government and Parliament ought to enact a strict law banning all forms of mediation on the part of any official or Parliament member.

Fahd Rimawi, a columnist in Akhbar Al Usbuh, voiced his criticism of the government's strict adherence to the instructions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the course of implementing its economic restructuring program.

The government is following all the rules given by the IMF and seems to be directing the economy along the same path followed by Egypt and Tunisia where the IMF plans resulted in total collapse and created an opportune climate for extremism and violence on the part of the needy and the deprived.

Rimawi said that the unemployment and the poverty, which have been plaguing our society could lead to the violence that has been plaguing Algeria, Yemen, Tunisia and Egypt, because one would expect the hungry and the poor to resort to receiving bribes, committing robberies and thefts, following violent ways and conducting illegal practices, like smuggling, to make a living.

The writer said that the poor and the needy are bound to resort to violence and unlawful acts as they continue to suffer from poverty and watch a minority enjoying the wealth. He added that it was due to the social imbalances and the poverty that had faced the Soviet Union for so long that this power has collapsed and not because of confrontation with another superpower.

A columnist in Al Dustour attacked the Islamic regimes for their failure to live up to the aspirations of their masses, noting that these regimes are separated from their masses by huge gaps.

Ahmad Anani said that many of the heads of governments in these Islamic countries are working against the interests of their own masses. In addition, while the regimes continue to become rich, the majority of their nations live in poverty, the writer added.

Up to 80 per cent of those living in the Islamic world are down-trodden people with no interest in defending their own homeland as they do not enjoy any rights in their own countries, he said.

The writer said that the Islamic regimes of the world continue to lend support to the United Nations, which acts against the interests of the Arab and Islamic peoples, but fail to do anything at the United Nations in defence of people and their human rights.

كلمة من الكاتب

Christopher consults Mideast leaders

(Continued from page 1)

environment will not be held this month.

"The postponement of the multilateral seems to be a wise and judicious course under the circumstances," Mr. Christopher said. "But I think the process put forward on Monday to deal with the issue of the deportees is going forward just about as predicted."

"I think that we will see a resumption of the peace process at an early date and I am not at all discouraged or disappointed by the reaction we've had," he said. "I'm encouraged to think the peace process is back to track at a very early time. I want to emphasize that President Clinton and I are determined that this will happen."

On Wednesday, the administration claimed growing support for diverting an Arab drive to punish Israel for exiling the Palestinians.

Again calling its compromise agreement with Israel a "breakthrough," State Department spokesman Boucher said it was time to focus on the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

But no invitations were issued to resume the Washington negotiations and there was no indication the PLO would give up until Israel either repatriates all the exiles or the U.N. Security Council considers sanctions against the Jewish state.

Palestinian peace negotiators are expected to meet Mr. Christopher in Arab East Jerusalem during his visit to the Middle East later this month, a senior PLO official said in Tunis.

PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo told Reuters Washington he had contacted Mr. Hussein, the coordinator of the Palestinian team, about Mr. Christopher's visit and plans for a meeting in Arab East Jerusalem.

He said Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi would visit Washington for preparatory discussions with U.S. officials before Mr. Christopher's trip to Israel and several Arab countries. Mr. Abed Rabbo said the Palestinians hoped the peace crisis would be resolved before the visit, scheduled from Feb. 17.

Arafat leaves after Amman talks

(Continued from page 1)

confirm or deny that a mini-summit or larger Arab summit was in the making. Moves towards an Arab reconciliation are "what is called for — something we have been striving towards and are continuing to strive for," he said.

Some political observers say that a full-scale reconciliation between the so-called pro- and anti-Iraq camp is far off.

The Gulf states, in particular Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, are not ready for reconciliation with Jordan, Yemen, Sudan and the PLO much less with Iraq under Saddam Hussein," said one seasoned Arab diplomat.

However, an Egyptian and American-backed initiative to reconcile the pro- and anti-Iraq blocs in the Arab World is believed to be gathering momentum. "The possibility of a ministerial meeting, maybe in Egypt, is not inconceivable," said one Jordanian diplomat.

The Iraqi leadership has sent signals of a desire for relations with the U.S. since the Clinton administration was sworn in.

Several members of the Iraqi leadership, including Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan and Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, have said that they believed the West and other Arab countries should be interested in rebuilding their relationship with Iraq in an effort to fend off the strategic threat posed by Iran.

"I had positive and constructive talks with President Saddam Hussein," Mr. Arafat told reporters. "We discussed how we can reunite Arab ranks and how to approach the new world order and how not to make future Arab generations the victims of this new order."

While in Baghdad, Mr. Arafat said President Saddam urged him to continue with the peace efforts. It came in direct contradiction of the policy traditionally followed by the Iraqi leadership. Historically opposed to any reconciliation between the Zionist state and the Arab World, the Iraqi government's advice to Mr. Arafat is a significant step, political observers said.

The Iraqi Baathist lobby within the PLO, known as the Arab Front for the Liberation of Palestine, has consistently voted against Palestinian participation in the peace talks with Israel.

'Abu Shakoush' hits claim third fatality

(Continued from page 1)

registers were left untouched. Reports from independent sources that a hammer was left behind at the scene of Thursday's crime could not be confirmed. "The shop, Salam Electrical Appliances, used to sell hammers," noted one source, "so why should a hammer look out of place in the shop?"

Thursday's attack came more than two weeks after police detained a man in the Wihdat area of Amman as a prime "Abu Shakoush" suspect.

Police have maintained almost total silence on the arrest of the suspect, identified as Khalil Muhammad Al Bawadi, 35.

According to a police report, the man was detained after he behaved in a suspicious manner: Upon seeing a police patrol approaching, the suspect threw a hammer he was carrying at another man who was with him. The second man, identified as Ziad Muhammad Rashid, 33, a resident of Russeifa, fled the scene.

The detained suspect, a resident of the Dabaybeh area of Wihdat, was in a drunken state but otherwise in full control of his senses and mental abilities, the police report said.

No further information was available, and sources said investigations were continuing. It was not known whether there was any evidence to suggest the suspect was indeed "Abu Shakoush" or whether the second man who fled was caught.

Police sources have said that the suspect could have been the official attributed to "Abu Shakoush" — a

"We hope the deportations issue would be solved even before Christopher's visit so discussions can concentrate then on issues related to the peace process," he said.

Mr. Abed Rabbo, head of the PLO's Information Department, reiterated the Palestinian position that "implementation of the U.N. resolution calling for the return of the Palestinian deportees is the one thing which will assure the restart of the peace process."

The PLO meanwhile distanced itself from statements attributed to an aide to Chairman Yasser Arafat that the peace talks could resume without the return home of the Palestinian exiles in South Lebanon.

"Bassam Abu Sharif's statements do not represent at all the Palestinian attitude, nor does he express the policy of the PLO and its leadership," a PLO spokesman said.

"The PLO reaffirms ... the necessity of the immediate return of all the deportees and the full implementation of Resolution 799," he said in comments quoted by the official Palestinian news agency Wafa.

Swiss Radio quoted Mr. Abu Sharif as saying the peace talks could resume next month even if the problem of the exiles was not fully resolved.

Responding to the report, the PLO spokesman said: "Resuming the participation in the peace process in its two bilateral and multilateral tracks is linked to the implementation of the Security Council resolution and the return home of all the deportees."

Contacted later by Reuters, Mr. Abu Sharif said he had expressed a personal viewpoint rather than a PLO decision in his comments to Swiss Radio.

"It is true that I told the Swiss Radio I think the negotiations will restart after the month of Ramadan, even if Resolution 799 is not fully enforced."

"But I added that I am optimistic that Warren Christopher, during his coming visit to the Middle East, will make sure that (Resolution) 799 is fully implemented."

"This will pave the way for the restart of the peace negotiations," Mr. Abu Sharif said.

theory further strengthened by Thursday's attack

"We don't think it was one person who was behind the (six known) attacks," said one of the sources earlier. "It is highly probable that different people carried out the crimes and deliberately left a trail suggesting it was one individual."

The death of Shahatit raises to three the number of known deaths in attacks attributed to "Abu Shakoush." The earlier victims were a pharmacist in the same Firas Circle neighbourhood of Jabal Hussein as Thursday's attack and the other a shopkeeper in the Wihdat area.

The series of attacks on a spare parts shop, a supermarket, a pharmacy, a liquor store, a building materials shop and a paint-shop started Sept. 14.

Two victims escaped with injuries while two others suffered serious skull wounds and remain in hospital. Descriptions of their assailants provided by the victims appeared to point to the same man.

Police have established several common features in the attacks. These include: All the incidents took place in the early morning hours; all victims were relatively old men; the weapon used was most probably a medium-sized hammer; the victims were robbed of cash carried on their persons while cash registers were left untouched.

Building on the descriptions provided by victims, police are looking for an Egyptian national or someone speaking with an Egyptian accent, wearing a big moustache, dark-skinned, medium-built, with curly hair and wearing a headress which could be used to hide his facial features.

In the Caucasus Mountains, a war that could tear Russia apart

By Alan Cooperman
The Associated Press

KARTSA, Russia — The Ingush Muslims are savages, says Marat Khaiti. If we do not cleanse our land of them, our grandchildren will spit in our faces.

The man spewing this hatred is a 30-year-old warehouse clerk in north Ossetia, a mostly Christian region in Russia's jagged, snow-laden Caucasus Mountains.

For six days in November, he battled his Muslim neighbours with hunting rifles and gasoline bombs as they tried to burn each other out of their homes. But he also admits his family secretly sheltered an Ingush woman and child, probably saving their lives.

It is a contradiction that reflects the political, ethnic and emotional confusion in the Caucasus, where a dozen ethnic groups have lived side by side — and occasionally fought each other — for centuries.

The fighting has occurred mainly in times of upheaval, when Moscow's grip has loosened. In 1918, after the Bolshevik revolution, in 1942, when the Nazis were advancing.

And now, with the fall of communism.

More than 330 people died when the Ingush and Ossetians fought in November, the first ethnic violence inside Russia since the Soviet Union's collapse.

Tens of thousands of refugees fled villages like Kartsa, now a silent cluster of brick cottages with black scorch marks curling above the windows.

To halt the fighting, President Boris Yeltsin declared a state of emergency Nov. 2 and sent in 5,000 paratroopers.

A curfew, censorship and martial law remain in effect in this part of the northern Caucasus, 2,400 kilometres south of Moscow.

Only the rumbling of Russian armor through mountain hamlets kept a bitter truce as peace talks finally opened Jan. 23 in Kislovodsk, a resort famed for its healing mineral springs. No substantial progress was made, but both sides agreed to meet again in February.

Mr. Yeltsin will need all the magic of the local waters, and then some, to end the ancient feud between the 100,000 Ingush and 400,000 Ossetians. Historians say they have been fighting for territory since the 13th century, when Mongol invaders drove the Ossetians' ancestors into the Ingush-held mountains.

The price of peace today may be billions of roubles of replacement housing, an investment the government can hardly afford.

But the cost of failure in the talks could be far higher.

From the Black Sea to Siberia, Russia is a checkerboard of 21 republics and 11 "autonomous" regions dominated by various minority groups. As inflation and crime worsen, they are battling over a shrinking economic pie.

Ossetians and Ingush could lead the way to civil war or breakup.

"It's time to declare loudly: The fate of all Russia is being decided" in the Caucasus, said Gen. Alexander Kotenkov, head of the region's temporary military government.

The mountain range stretches 800 kilometres between the Black and Caspian seas, forming Russia's southern border with Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Those two former Soviet republics also face conflicts in the mountains: Azerbaijan is fighting Armenia for control of Nagorno-Karabakh, while Georgia combats separatists in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The South Ossetians want to unite with their brethren in Russia.

The interethnic battles confuse not only outsiders, but sometimes also the combatants.

Mr. Khaiti could not explain why he harbored Ingush neighbours in his home during the November bloodletting, and he did not want his fellow militants to know.

"It was only a woman and a little girl," he said apologetically. Yet he was adamant that the two ethnic groups can no longer live together — all Ingush should leave North Ossetia, or be pushed out.

"We hate them and they hate us," he said.

The latest violence erupted Oct. 31 after a week of mounting Ingush street protests that began when a 12-year-old Ingush girl was accidentally run over by an Ossetian armoured personnel carrier.

But the modern conflict goes back nearly 50 years, to Soviet

dictator Josef Stalin's decision to deport the entire Ingush nation for collaborating with the Nazis during World War II.

In February 1944, an estimated 60,000 Ingush were packed into railroad cattle cars and sent to desolate Kazakhstan. As many as one-third died during the four-day journey or soon after arriving in winter, without food or shelter, in a hostile land.

Meanwhile, Ossetians moved into their former homes.

In 1957, the Ingush were legally "rehabilitated" and began returning to the Caucasus. They claim the 3,625-square-kilometre Prigorodny District, including part of the North Ossetian capital, Vladikavkaz, as their land. But more than 50,000 Ossetians now live there, and they have no intention of giving it up.

"You cannot undo the injustice of 1944 with another injustice today," said Akhsharbek Galazov, chairman of the North Ossetian parliament. "If we begin revising borders, where will it ever end?"

During the Oct. 31-Nov. 5 fighting, both sides used a simple, devastating tactic to assert their claim to the land.

When they seized a village, they identified houses owned by the enemy, turned on gas stoves, and waited a few minutes. Then they tossed in hand grenades or bottles of gasoline stuffed with burning rags.

The result: rows of houses with the roofs blown off. Inside, nothing is left but charred timbers and smithereens of crockery.

Outside, pretty picket fences and decorative window sills are disconcertingly intact.

In some villages that changed hands more than once, the only undamaged homes belong to

neutrals. Mikhail Katsuba, 68, saved his house in Kartsa by chalking "Russian" on it in big letters.

The more numerous Ossetians generally got the upper hand in the fighting. Some Ingush claim Russian troops helped the Ossetians because they are fellow Orthodox Christians. Russian officers deny it.

Since the truce, hundreds of hostages have been exchanged, but many families are still searching for relatives. Rumours of

atrocities are common, but could not be confirmed.

An estimated 5,000 Ossetians fled the fighting for other parts of the republic, and many are now homeless. The Ingush situation is even worse: authorities say 62,000 refugees registered in Nazran, the capital of Ingushetia 25 kilometres north of Vladikavkaz.

Zhabi, a bearded Ingush fighter, was burned out of his home and now lives with 16 relatives in a one-room apartment in Nazran

that reeks of urine, dirty laundry and fried potatoes.

The first time he shot an Ossetian in the face, Zhabi said, he was sick to his stomach for two hours. But after that, "killing got much easier and I did a lot of it."

He declined to give his full name for fear of arrest. He said he expected to fight again, but he offered a visitor a bullet from his pistol as a souvenir.

"I had eight left, now I've got only seven," he said. "You have saved the life of one Ossetian."

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Davis Cup

Iran secures 2-0 lead on first day of competition

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Iran Friday secured a 2-0 lead in the first day of competition against Jordan in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group 2 first round tie held at the Sports Palace Court and attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor.

Iran's Mansour Bahrami defeated Jordan's second-ranked Imad Abu Hamda 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 in the opening match. Iran also won the second match when Mustafa Saleh overcame Jordan's No. 1 Hani Al Ali 6-7 (7-5), 1-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Jordan's Ali played with great confidence in the first set and won the tiebreaker 7-5. He easily won the second set 6-1 but suffered a cramp in the third set which he later lost 6-2. Ali opted to continue the match though he was limping in the final two sets which Iran's Saleh won 6-2, 6-1.

In the first match of the tie, Jordan's Abu Hamda proved he was no easy opponent to Iran's former No. 1 Bahrami. After Bahrami had established a commanding 5-2 lead, he could not hold serve. Abu Hamda won the game and held serve as Jordan trailed 5-4. Bahrami held serve in the next game to win the first set 6-4.

Bahrami, who now lives in Paris and mainly plays exhibition matches, held the No. 13 ranking in doubles three years ago. His current No. 947 singles ranking (down from No. 100 in 1986) and his experience, made the difference in his match with the younger Abu Hamda.

Bahrami's powerful serves and strong returns enabled him to lead 4-0 in the second set. Both players held serve and Bahrami kept the lead 3-1. Bahrami then broke his opponent's serve to



Hani Al Ali

lead 4-1.

In the next game Abu Hamda led 40-15 and twice lost the chance to secure the game, but his overheads were too long as the game was held at deuce. Abu Hamda won the next two points as the crowd of over 400 tennis fans cheered and roared with every point.

Both players then held serve and Bahrami kept the lead 5-3. Abu Hamda led 40-0 in the next game and thought he won the game after serving an ace which was ruled out by the umpire. Bahrami came back to win the second set 6-3.

Bahrami again led 3-1 in the third set, but not before Abu Hamda hit some superb shots that earned the applause of his opponent.

Both players held serve as Bahrami kept the lead 5-3 while Abu Hamda abandoned his baseline to rush the net.

Bahrami clinched the third set 6-3 and secured Iran's first win in



Imad Abu Hamda

the three-day competition.

"I'm really happy about the score," Abu Hamda told the Jordan Times in a post match statement. "To get a 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 score against a player like Bahrami is a thrill for me. It's a thrill to play against him and do well in the match."

Abu Hamda said "the supporting crowd made a big difference. When I played Malaysia's No. 1 Adam Malek last year the score was 6-0, 6-2, 6-2. Although he was an easier opponent, the fact that I was playing on my own without the support of cheering fans in Malaysia made a difference."

"I was really worried about the match at first because I hadn't practised my serves for the past six days because of an injury in my shoulder. During the past week I had only returned my coaches' serves," said Abu Hamda, adding, "Maybe that helped, my forehand and returns have improved. But my serves let me down at the end of the match. I

lost a little bit of pace after I was tired."

"I felt I did much better as the match progressed, and although I made silly mistakes and lost some overheads I am happy about the way I played," Abu Hamda said. Jordan's head coach, Yousef Oreibi reiterated that Bahrami is a professional, experienced player against whom he had played back in 1977. "It's great that Imad played so well against a tough opponent today. Imad gave it his best, and probably played his best match ever."

"Imad could have concentrated more on overheads and volleys but otherwise he played great," Oreibi told the Jordan Times.

Ali might miss Saturday's doubles

Hani Al Ali might have to skip Saturday's doubles match after he suffered cramps early in the third set of his singles match Friday.

In a post-match statement to the Jordan Times said he doubted being able to play the doubles match with partner Abu Hamda.

"I'm in pretty bad situation now. I'm physically exhausted. I deal have never quit a match. There was no specialist available to with the problem, and I kept hanging on until the end," Ali said.

"I think we are not prepared to play a five set match. We haven't even played five-set training matches," Ali pointed out.

"I am not blaming anyone but I think this should be a lesson for the future. I hope we will have an orderly training programme, and enough matches prior to the competition to actually allow us the chance to evaluate our preparedness and solve any problems in due course," said Ali.

Graf, Navratilova in Toray semifinals

YOKOHAMA (R) — Veteran Martina Navratilova effortlessly brushed aside Nathalie Tauziat Friday to set up a semifinal clash with top seed Steffi Graf in the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament.

Navratilova, playing in her first tournament since losing to Monica Seles in the Virginia Slims final in November, unleashed a formidable serve and volley game to beat the Frenchwoman 6-1 6-2.

Graf had a similarly easy time disposing of Japanese qualifier Yone Kamio 6-1 6-2, surprising her opponent, who had only ever seen her on television, with her strength and power.

Navratilova enjoyed an unexpectedly one-sided match after Tauziat showed devastating form Thursday in eliminating fifth seed Manuela Frangiere.

But Tauziat rarely landed her first serve, enabling third-seeded Navratilova to storm the net after a blistering return on her short second serve.

"I'm very excited to get a change to play against Steffi," said Navratilova afterwards.

"I'm pleased just to be able to stand on the same court as her as we only got to play against each other once last year," the Czech-born American added.

"But I'll really have to concentrate, because if you give Steffi just a little bit of room, she takes the whole room."

Graf said: "I'm looking forward to playing Martina, but ... this fast surface definitely suits her game better than mine."



Martina Navratilova of the U.S. returns against Nathalie Tauziat of France during their quarter final of the Toray Pan Pacific Open (AFP photo)

Graf, who failed to regain the world number one ranking when she lost to Seles in the Australian Open final last Saturday, had not difficulty in disposing of local hope Kamio.

"I played pretty well, made few mistakes and really went for my shots," she said.

Kamio, ranked 139th in the world and seventh in Japan, put up a brave fight but lacked the weapons to fend off Graf's powerful and accurate serve, fearsome forehand and great agility.

"Graf was much stronger than I expected," said Kamio. "I'd always only seen her play on TV before, so was really pleased to get the chance to play against her."



Alphand wins men's combined downhill

SHIZUKUJISHI, Japan (AP) — Luc Alphand of France Friday won for the second time on the Mount Takakura Downhill Course and pronounced himself ready to pursue the most sought-after prize in the world Alpine Ski Championships: The downhill gold medal.

That Alphand gave little notice to the fact that he had won the combined downhill is understandable. He's a downhill specialist and has no reasonable expectation that he can hold off the likes of Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg, Gunter Mader of Austria and Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway in the slalom portion of the event.

But Alphand knows that, after winning a training run and then Friday's combined race, no other downhiller is as tuned in to this mountain as he is.

"I think I just need confidence and today was good for that," Alphand said after traveling down the 1 3/4-mile (2,735-metre) course in 1 minute, 32.19 seconds. "For the real downhill, anything can happen. It's another day, another setting, completely different."

Bowe fights Dokes today

NEW YORK (R) — World heavyweight champion Riddick Bowe is evidently talking Saturday's fight with Michael Dokes as seriously as the odds-makers, who have made him an overwhelming 12-1 on favourite.

Despite claims to the contrary from his camp, the evidence appears clear that Bowe has not been working as hard preparing for Dokes as he did when he took the world champion's crown off Evander Holyfield.

Bowe, making the first defence of two of the three titles he won by outpointing Holyfield last November, weighed in a sloppy eight pounds (3.6 kg) over his weight for Holyfield.

Bowe, 25, also trained about half the time — four weeks — for the scheduled 12 rounds against Dokes as he had for Holyfield.

Bowe, 32-0, holds the World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) versions of the title.

JBF declares new ruling on latest controversy

Ahli await Ministry of Youth's decision

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) has announced its latest decision regarding the recent controversy that hit the First Division Basketball Championship's final match between Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxy.

At a press conference held Thursday, the JBF declared a new best-of-3 deciding round will be played by the top two teams, with the first of these matches scheduled for Tuesday Feb. 9. The new ruling did not resolve the problem however, as it was accepted by Al Orthodoxy, but rejected by Al Ahli.

The new ruling annuls the previous two matches of the competition. The first was won 68-65 by Al Ahli in the first round final Dec. 30 while the second was won by Al Orthodoxy 84-81 in overtime in the second round Jan. 26.

The controversy pertains to the second match in which two extra points were awarded to Al Orthodoxy by the court referee. Al Ahli lodged a formal protest with the JBF citing that they had also objected to the mistake during the match. The JBF however state that Al Ahli cannot object after the match.

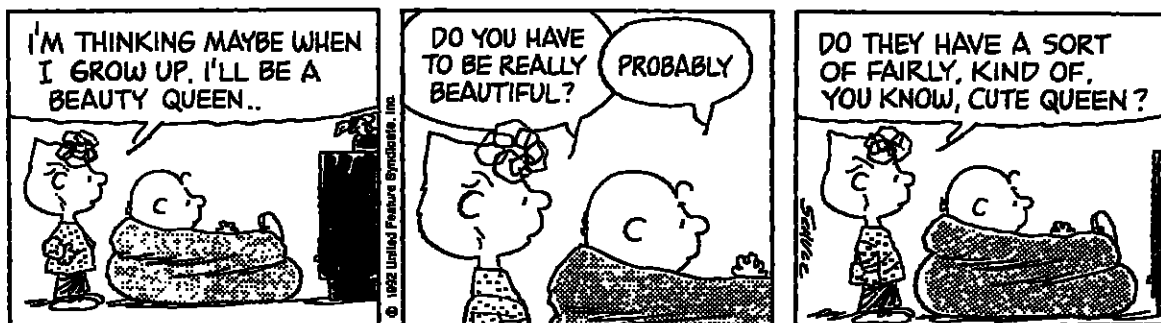
and held on to the referees committee report that Al Ahli had not formally protested the mistake during the match.

The JBF's rejection of Al Ahli's protest and the acceptance of the referees committee's recommendation to consider Al Orthodoxy the winner warranted a third deciding match, as both teams tied with 27 points in the overall standings. Al Ahli however, refused to play a third match citing that they had fully applied article 68 of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) rules concerning objections during and after the match. The JBF later announced that it was postponing the third match to an indefinite date.

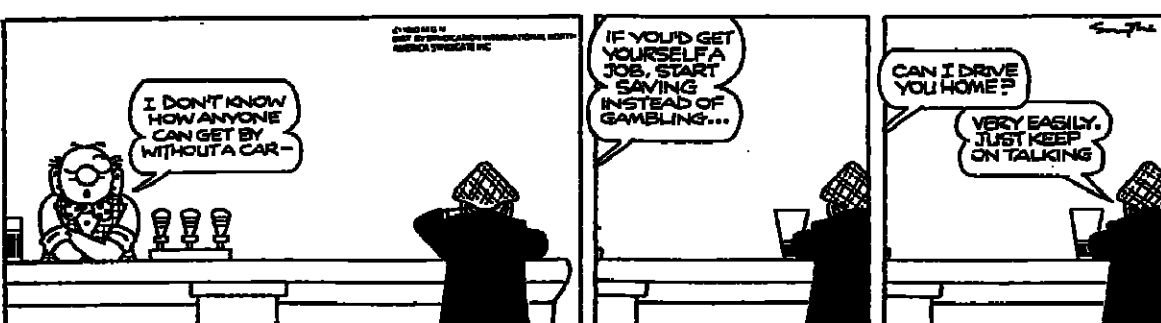
The new best-of-3 ruling was rejected by Al Ahli Friday as "the club was still awaiting a response to the appeal presented to the Ministry of Youth," club General Secretary and spokesman Samir Janakat said in a statement to the press.

"Al Ahli club believe that Jordan is an institutional country and that its affairs are run in accordance with rules and regulations. We have appealed this matter to the Ministry of Youth and are awaiting their response — which we are sure

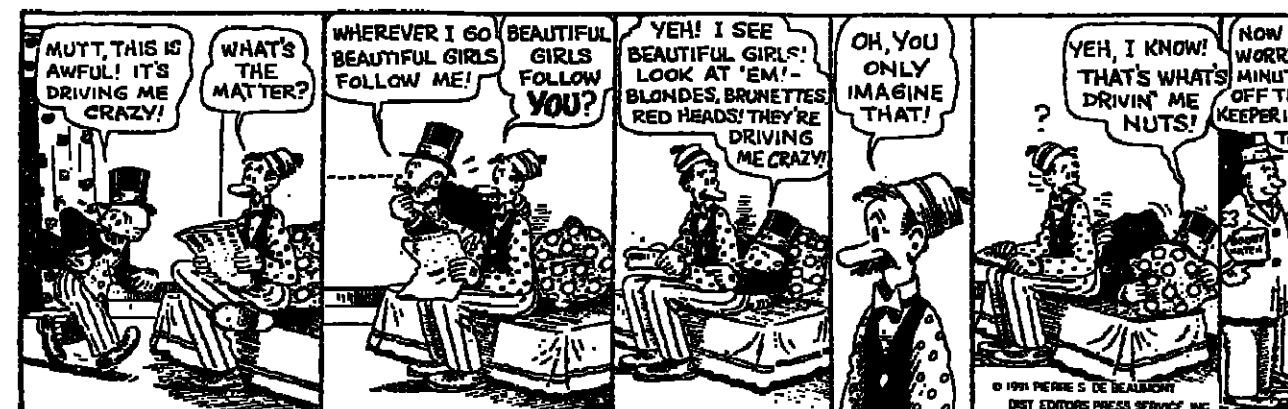
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY FEBRUARY 6, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: There's a general air of comradery present today, but take care to remember that all isn't as it seems, for there's much jockeying for position going on. Egos bruise easily today.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have many ideas which can take form so you better know just what you want out of it and tonight you can take these to one able to back them.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can analyze better systems by which to increase the good things you enjoy in life, then you will be able to make them work in your behalf.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A knowledgeable conversation between you and a bright associate brings to light how you can best progress so don't hesitate but put a plan right in motion.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take some time out to think about how you can improve matters you have agreed to do, then do it procrastinate but make them work for you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) In the morning perfect whatever talents you have been concentrating upon and you will find later you are able to benefit by making them public.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Discuss with a family member what add to the efficiency, charm

of your own home, then tonight get busy and make it improve home conditions.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) In the morning get at correspondence and desk work and get it interestingly behind you while tonight you can have a marvelous time at home.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 22) You can wind up in the morning whatever practical financial arrangements you have been making while tonight get busy seeking new ways to be more productive.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 23 to December 21) Be just as subjective as you like in making up your mind on the various longings that mean much to you while later you can put in motion the practical gaining.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get confidential suggestions from those in the know-how for winning what you want most and you can go after it using your own charm.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Use your own forcefulness during the morning to gain your desires, but later go after what you want in a more subtle and indirect fashion.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Do whatever requires your attention of a civic or credit nature in the morning while tonight brings a good chance to gain your personal ambitions.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"I can't think of anything nice to do today. How 'bout I just give you a dollar?"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold

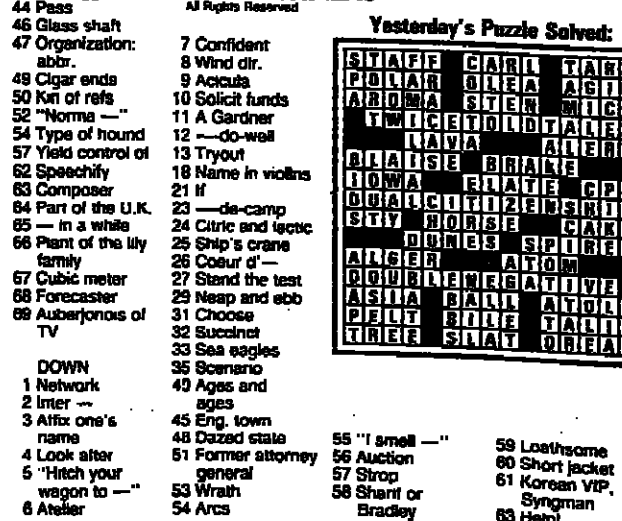
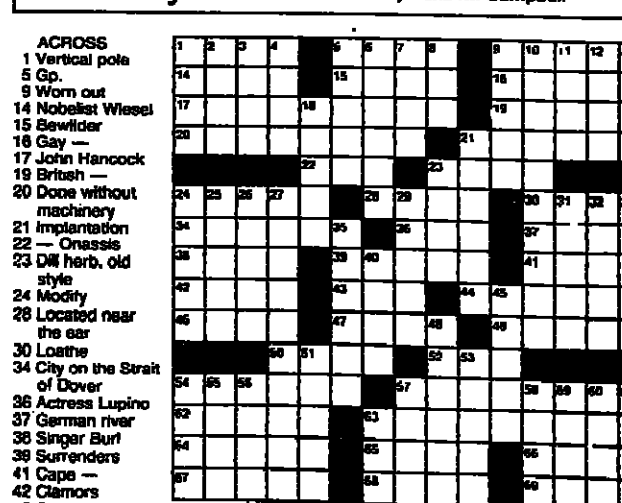
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumble: WHISK TRACT SEETH BABIED
Answer: Mothers sometimes get into these when there's not enough food to go around—STEWES

THE Daily Crossword by Rene M. Campbell



GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TAMMAM HIRSH
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PLAY OR DEFEND?

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A K 4
♥ K J 9 2
♦ A K
♣ 7 6 5 2

WEST
♠ Q J 10 8 5
♥ 8 6
♦ Q 10 8 5 3
♣ J

EAST
♠ 8 6 2
♥ 7 3
♦ J 9 7 4
♣ K 10 9 8

SOUTH
♠ 7 3
♥ A Q 10 6 4
♦ 6 2
♣ A Q 4 3

The bidding:
North: 1NT Pass 3♦ Pass
South: 3♦ Pass 4♣ Pass
West: 4♣ Pass 4♦ Pass
East: 4♦ Pass 5♦ Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

Study the complete diagram. Would you rather play or defend six hearts after West leads the queen of spades?

The auction is a lesson in reasoned bidding. After South's jump to three hearts, North's three spades was an advance cue-bid confirming a maximum no trump and good heart support. South showed first-round club control, but had nothing

further to add over North's four-diamond cue-bid. Knowing that second-round club control was missing, North was satisfied with a small slam.

Does it look as if there is no way to avoid two club losers? Suppose you win the opening lead, draw trumps in two rounds, cash the remaining high spade and ruff a spade. Now clear the ace-king of diamonds and lead a club, ducking completely in hand. West wins cheaply, but no matter which suit the defender returns, you can ruff in dummy while discarding a club from hand. Now a club finesse allows you to score both the ace and queen of clubs, and you have 12 tricks—four trumps, two spades and a ruff, two diamonds, two clubs and the ruff-shuff.

But don't be in such a hurry to switch sides and elect to declare. A brilliant defender such as you in the East seat can defeat the contract by applying what you've learned about the hand. When declarer leads a club from dummy, shoot up with the king! That play cannot cost, no matter how the club suit is distributed. Here it takes partner off the end-play, and no matter how declarer maneuvers you will eventually score two club tricks.

Financial Markets

in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 3/2/93	Tokyo Close Date 4/2/93
Sterling Pound	1.4350	1.4430
Deutsche Mark	1.6452	1.6437
Swiss Franc	1.5247	1.5215
French Franc	5.5740	5.5825**
Japanese Yen	124.40	124.60
European Currency Unit	1.1815	1.1825**

* USD Per STG
** European Opening of 300 a.m. GMT

Reconvertibility Interest Rates

Currency	1 MYH	3 MYH	6 MYH	12 MYH
U.S. Dollar	3.00	3.15	3.28	3.62
Sterling Pound	6.18	6.12	5.50	5.37
Deutsche Mark	8.43	8.18	7.20	7.31
Swiss Franc	5.31	5.31	5.18	5.12
French Franc	12.37	12.25	11.31	9.25
Japanese Yen	3.15	3.25	3.25	3.25
European Currency Unit	9.62	9.62	9.25	8.75

Interest bid rates for Jordanian currency U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Commodity	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	328.50	6.40	Silver	3.69	.080

* 31 Karat
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.691	0.693
Sterling Pound	0.9968	1.0018
Deutsche Mark	0.4201	0.4222
Swiss Franc	0.4535	0.4558
French Franc	0.1239	0.1245
Japanese Yen	0.5544	0.5572
Dutch Guilder	0.3751	0.3750
Swedish Krona	0.0918	0.0923
Italian Lira	0.0451	0.0453
Belgian Franc	0.02037	0.02047

* Per 100

Currency	Bid	Offer
Lebanese Lira	1.8100	1.8230
Saudi Riyal	0.0355	0.0410
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2300	2.2900
Qatari Riyal	0.1872	0.1884
Egyptian Pound	0.1950	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7600	1.7800

* Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.2613/18	Canadian dollar	1.6590/600
	1.8660/70	Deutsche marks	1.5308/18
	34.18/22	Swiss francs	5.6110/60
	5.6110/60	French francs	1523/1528
	7.4130/230	Italian lire	124.62/67
	7.0150/250	Japanese yen	6.3650/750
	1.4470/80	Swedish crowns	1.4470/80
	3327.60/328.10	Norwegian crowns	
		Danish crowns	

One sterling

One ounce of gold

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN
TELEPHONE: 646170 / 646179

CONSOLIDATED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (30/1/1993 - 03/02/1993)

WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME

TRADING VOLUME

PROV. CLOSING PRICE

OFFERING CLOSING PRICE

AMMAN BANK

JORDAN NATIONAL BANK

CASIO JORDAN BANK

BANK OF JORDAN

JORDANIAN INVESTMENT BANK

THE JORDANIAN BANK

JORDAN REALTY BANK

AMMAN JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK

JORDAN SECURITIES BANK

UNION BANK FOR SAVINGS & INVESTMENT

WILSON BANK

JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK

WEST JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT

AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT

JORDAN BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN

JORDAN INSURANCE

ALJALAL BANK

UNION INSURANCE

JORDAN INSURANCE

AMMAN LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE

JORDAN GULF INSURANCE

AMMAN JORDAN INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE

JORDAN SECURITIES BANK

AL-JALAL BANK

JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER

JORDANIAN PORTFOLIO INVESTMENT

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UAE trademark law comes into effect

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has started implementing wide-ranging legislation to put an end to sales of counterfeit products and pirated works of art.

The ministry of commerce has issued 15 pages of regulation for companies to register their logos under the trademark law, one of the three laws which make up the UAE's first intellectual property rights legislation.

Jaafar Al Fardan, assistant under-secretary at the Ministry of Finance and Industry, told Reuters that regulations for a patent law were due this month. A copyright law is due to come into force on April 12.

Lawyers said the three laws were partly intended to remove obstacles to business with major Western trading partners.

The trademark law gives companies a legal basis to protest at trademark infringement in the UAE. UAE courts were previously recognising trademark ownership only sporadically.

"In the past you would have to find various methods to prove you owned logos or symbols," said Herb Wolfson, a lawyer at Afridi and Angell law firm in Abu Dhabi.

"Now, with registration at a federal agency, you just have to produce your registration certificate."

The regulations say local and foreign firms must first apply to the ministry of commerce to register a trademark and then publish it in the official gazette and two daily newspapers.

The trademark is then registered if ownership is not contested by a second party within 30 days.

A UAE tax firm was one of the first companies inquiring about registering its company logo.

The penalties for trademark infringement include confiscation of counterfeit goods, jail terms, and fines of up to 10,000 dirhams (\$2,700).

The UAE has been under pressure from major trading partners France and the United States to pass the intellectual property rights legislation.

The United States says its industries have lost up to \$156 million a year from infringements in the UAE.

The U.S. Department of Commerce presented a report to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) secretariat in Riyadh last July urging Gulf Arab states to adopt such laws.

Germany and Japan lower interest rates

NEW YORK (AP) — Germany and Japan applied the tonic of lower interest rates Thursday to stimulate their ailing economies, a move that sent positive ripples throughout the world and could have a particularly beneficial impact in the United States.

The cuts in lending rates by the two most important U.S. trading partners were modest, but they came as the American economy was showing emphatic signs of expansion anyway. The U.S. stock market hit a record high on the news.

Economists said the lower rates would help keep lending rates low in the United States. If they are followed by further cuts, the results eventually could translate into greater foreign demand for U.S. goods and services, further ensuring the domestic economy's rebound.

In the United States, thousands of jobs are tied to exports, which account for an estimated 12 per cent of U.S. economic activity. Exports have slowed in recent months, partly due to the economic problems in Japan and Germany.

"Those markets are essential if U.S. trade markets are to be improved," said Michael Hutchins, an economics professor at University of California at Santa Cruz and a visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. "This signals good news for U.S. exporters."

For Europe, the German rate cuts could ease the instability among neighbouring currencies

Thousands flee eastern Bosnia

SARAJEVO (AP) — While a fuel shortage in the Bosnian capital worsened and nearly 5,000 Muslims fled two starving eastern villages, leaders of the republic's warring factions debated a peace plan in the United States.

U.N. officials in Tuzla, eastern Bosnia, said Serb militiamen were letting the Muslims leave besieged towns Thursday in order to carry out "ethnic cleansing" in the region. More than 5,000 refugees were expected to reach Tuzla Friday.

"These people are arriving in very bad medical condition ... and there are reports of deaths along the way," the U.N. statement said.

In New York, Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said Thursday that lasting peace requires segregating Serbs, Croats and Muslims in separate provinces of the war-torn republic.

But in Washington, Bosnia's foreign minister and several U.S. lawmakers said the plan makes unacceptable concessions to Serbian aggressors, favours war criminals over their victims and rewards "crimes against humanity."

Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic attacked the plan as appeasement of an aggressor reminiscent of the 1938 Munich agreement with Adolf Hitler.

The peace plan proposed by U.N. envoy Cyrus Vance and European Community mediator Lord Owen would divide Bosnia-Herzegovina into 10 provinces. Nine would be controlled by ethnic groups with Sarajevo under joint administration.

Mr. Silajdzic told U.S. lawmakers Thursday that drawing ethnic lines leaves territories subject to "ethnic cleansing" and ignored Bosnia's history as "the most successful model in

Europe" of ethnic coexistence. He said it also legitimises Serb war gains.

"This is 1938 again," Mr. Silajdzic said, referring to the Munich pact on the eve of world war in which Britain and France bowed to Nazi Germany's territorial demands on Czechoslovakia. "If we do not deal with it now, we must deal with it later. Better now than later."

Some Americans agreed. "To endorse the Vance-Owen plan would be to ratify genocidal aggression," said Rep. Frank McCloskey.

Mr. Karadzic, in an interview with the Associated Press, branded as lies reports about widespread reports of expulsions of Muslims and Croats and mass rapes by Serb forces.

"What happened in this war was not ethnic cleansing, it was ethnic shifting. It was not done by Serbian authorities," but consisted of ethnic groups voluntarily moving to join their compatriots, he said.

Mr. Karadzic and leaders of the Bosnia's Croat and Muslim communities are visiting New York to resume negotiations at U.N. Headquarters.

As the war of words continued, so did the guns in Bosnia and Croatia.

Heavy fighting was reported in eastern Bosnia. The Muslim-led government has been winning back some eastern areas lost to Serb forces last year in the war over the republic's secession from Yugoslavia.

Intensified fighting also was reported in southern Croatia, where Croatia's army is pressing a 2-week-old drive against the Serb-controlled Krajina region.

Croatian Serbs said they shot down a Croatian warplane that tried to bomb Serb-held Mirkovci

village, near Vinkovci. There was no independent confirmation.

A new aid convoy, meanwhile, moved toward Sarajevo in central Bosnia as U.N. officials warned that food stocks in the besieged capital would run out in three days unless replenished. Aid shipments were curtailed this week after attacks on a U.N. convoy.

Supplies of diesel, which fuels trucks delivering humanitarian aid within the city and generators providing heat and light at the city's hospitals, have not reached Sarajevo since Jan. 22, according to officials of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

An attack Tuesday on a UNHCR convoy near Mostar has heightened the crisis because the U.N. has suspended fuel and other convoys along that route until it receives an explanation for mortar fire that killed a translator and severely wounded the convoy leader.

Romania tightened international sanctions on Yugoslavia by stopping Yugoslav barges from travelling down the Danube to pick up fuel. A U.N. trade ban was imposed in May to punish Serbia for helping Serbs in the war in Bosnia and Croatia.

The Bosnian war has killed at least 18,000 people and created 1 million refugees.

Some of the worst fighting has been in the east, where borders Serbia. The first battles were fought there when Serbian militia invaded last spring. Muslim forces have been waging a big offensive there in recent weeks.

The Yugoslav News Agency Tanjug said Bosnian Serb military officials reported new Muslim-led attacks in eastern Bosnia, targeting Serb positions around Zvornik, on the border with Serbia, and Bratunac, farther south.

On Croatia's Adriatic coast, where a year-old Croatian-Serbian truce collapsed two weeks ago, both sides reported fighting around Serb-held Benkovac.

Croatian troops appeared to be trying to capture the town in preparation for an attack on Knin, capital of the Serb region in Croatia.

Bonn urges U.S. backing for Bosnia plan

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel urged President Bill Clinton to accept the peace plan for Bosnia being worked out by international mediators, and warned the only alternative was more war.

But Mr. Clinton continued to withhold his endorsement of the plan formulated by Mr. Vance and Lord Owen.

Mr. Kinkel met with Mr. Clinton and other officials Thursday. He was the first foreign minister to be received by Mr. Clinton during his first two weeks in office.

Mr. Kinkel told reporters he did not want to press the Americans and did not know when they would reach a decision.

"I underscored that it is the last chance we have to bring about a solution by peaceful means," he said.

He warned there might be "negative consequences" if the plan is not accepted, but acknowledged that some skepticism about it was justified.

"I do not have the impression that the plan is being simply rejected, but there are certain hesitations and I expressed understanding for such hesitation," he said at a news conference.



Serb soldiers of the Serbian enclave of Krajina, in Croatia, take cover behind a tank near Drnis, which had been lost to the Croats in the latest fighting (AFP photo)

Kozyrev, Christopher to meet in Geneva

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and new U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will meet on Feb. 25 in Geneva, Interfax News Agency said Friday.

It quoted the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying the two men would discuss topical bilateral issues.

But it seems possible the talks could help lay the ground for a first summit between President Boris Yeltsin and U.S. President

Bill Clinton.

President Yeltsin, clearly concerned by media suggestions the new U.S. leader will concentrate more on domestic issues at the expense of Eastern European and the former Soviet Union, has repeatedly said he would like an early summit with Mr. Clinton, possibly in a third country.

Mr. Yeltsin met Mr. Clinton's predecessor, George Bush, early last month in Moscow.

Russia is pushing for U.S.

cooperation and help in fields ranging from space research to finance and industrial production.

Mr. Bush and Mr. Yeltsin signed a START-2 strategic arms agreement providing for the complete elimination of multiple-warhead land-based missiles and slashing of overall arsenals by two-thirds.

But a number of military as well as political and economic issues remain outstanding.

Children and elderly Armenians are starving due to war shortages

ATLANTA (AP) — Armenians face starvation, diseases and hypothermia because of food and fuel shortages brought on by warfare, health workers say in a new report.

Most Armenian pensioners have exhausted their savings and many are selling their possessions to buy food, the U.S. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported Thursday.

Armenian babies are starving, the CDC also found in an emergency surveillance programme.

The CDC began helping the Ministry of Health of Armenia monitor nutrition and the food supply in November as fighting stepped up in the former Soviet republic's five-year conflict with neighbouring Azerbaijan.

Death rates will be reported later as compared for comparison. One of the epidemiologists working on the project.

"The impact that we're going to see on the population will be at its heaviest in the winter," she said. "People working in the morgues say they're getting increased numbers of the elderly

and young children dying. Our task is to verify that information."

Ongoing fuel shortages prevent food distribution, hinder cooking and disrupt the water supply, she said. As a result, Armenians face increased risks for hypothermia caused by lack of heat, diseases caused by malnutrition and infections caused by impure water.

The CDC is gauging the severity of the problem to help humanitarian aid officials decide where to concentrate efforts first, she said.

The shortages prompted an overall inflation rate of 360 per cent from April through December 1992. Meanwhile, the monthly pensions for the elderly increased only 250 per cent. The cost of a one-month supply of food was 23,000 rubles in December; the average pension was only 1,200 rubles.

A survey of 347 pensioners in December found that 89 per cent didn't have enough money to buy food, 80 per cent had no savings left and 71 per cent had less than one day's supply of food at home.

More were selling personal possessions to buy food — up from 18 per cent in an April

survey to 37 per cent in December — and more had lost at least five kilograms (11 pounds) in the previous six months — up from 45 per cent to 62 per cent, the CDC said.

Meanwhile, a check of medical records found more than five times as many malnourished babies in 1992 compared with the two previous years.

More people are getting sick as well. The Armenian Health Ministry reported the monthly rates of measles increased by 60 per cent, diarrhoea increased 61 per cent, viral hepatitis jumped 163 per cent and tuberculosis increased 75 per cent between April and October 1992.

The shortages mean drugs and vaccines also are scarce, Dr. Smith said.

The epidemiologists are starting to gather nutritional information on the 300,000 ethnic Armenian refugees flooding into the country from Azerbaijan.

Dr. Smith said initial reports found that 71 per cent of the refugees had lost more than 5 kilograms in the last six months; 55 per cent have no access to health care; and 28 per cent are without fresh water.

Soweto clear of political killings

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Soweto was clear of political murders in January, the first month in more than two-and-a-half years such killings had stopped in South Africa's biggest black township, a human rights commission said Friday.

But in a detailed monthly report on political violence in the country, the commission said there was a marked shift in attacks to Natal province.

Safura Sadek, national director of South Africa's Human Rights Commission, attributed the decline in Soweto to increased world attention and a September record of understanding between the African National Congress (ANC) and government to try to halt the slide into anarchy.

"When the world's eyes are on South Africa, violence declines," she told Reuters Friday, adding

that "more responsible policing" could be another factor.

The commission said it was encouraged by the decline in political killings in sprawling Soweto, "This after a year during which a monthly average of 36 deaths occurred (in this area)."

President F.W. de Klerk has said South Africa's first non-racial elections, which could take place late this year or early next year, would not go ahead unless the level of political violence declined.

In its report, the commission said that while the nationwide monthly death toll was significantly down to 175 from 292 compared to 1992, much of the violence had moved to Natal which accounted for nearly 60 per cent of January's figure.

"Security forces were responsible for five deaths and 35 injuries during January, low figures by

comparison with last year's monthly averages of 13 and 144," it said, adding that 10 members of the security forces were killed during the month.

The commission said it was disturbed by the emergence of attacks on train commuters in Natal, long a feature of violence in South Africa's industrial heartland around Johannesburg.

Police have stepped up patrolling railway stations and detained alleged members of armed train gangs during the past few weeks. More than 7,700 people have been killed in political violence in South Africa since Mr. de Klerk's unbanned opposition movements and began dismantling apartheid early in 1990.

Most of the fighting is between supporters of Nelson Mandela's ANC and Chief Mangosuthu Buthe's Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Hoover was blackmailed by mafia

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new book contends that the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was a closet homosexual blackmailed by the mafia with compromising photos into denying for decades the existence of organised crime. Author Anthony Summers writes in his book, *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover*, that top organised crime figures Meyer Lansky and Frank Costello obtained photos of Mr. Hoover's alleged homosexual activity with longtime aide Clyde Tolson used them to ensure the FBI did not target their illegal activities. For years, Mr. Hoover denied the existence of organised crime. There have long been rumours — some dating back to the 1930s — that Mr. Hoover was homosexual, often arising from his sharing a bachelor house with Mr. Tolson for years. But another Hoover biographer who heard the rumours of homosexuality and mob blackmail said Thursday he was never able to corroborate them. Mr. Hoover was FBI director from 1924 until he died in 1972. Mr. Tolson also is dead. As head of the FBI, Mr. Hoover made a habit of squirreling away information about the sexual lives of Washington's power elite, including John and Robert Kennedy, Eleanor Roosevelt and others, according to a number of biographers.

2 kidnapped nuns released in Philippines

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP) — Two Spanish nuns kidnapped last month by Muslim bandits were handed over Friday to Libyan and Palestinian envoys who helped negotiate their release. Sister Julia Forester, 63, and Sister Fatima Uribearen, 33, were turned over early Friday to Libyan Ambassador Rajab Azarouq and Palestine Liberation Organisation envoy Musa Odeh on the southern island of Sulu, state radio reported from the provincial capital Jolo. Military officials, who confirmed the release, said the nuns were in generally good health and had not been harmed. They were expected to be flown to Manila, 960 kilometres north of here, later in the day. The two Arab diplomats had gone to Sulu at the request of the Philippine government to help in the negotiations. The nuns were turned over to the envoys by the Muslim rebel Moro National Liberation Front, although the kidnappers had been described as "bandits." A front spokesman told state radio that the group's exiled leader, Nur Misuari, ordered the release because kidnapping was against Islamic Law.

Belarus ratifies START I

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — The parliament of Belarus ratified the START I treaty Thursday, leaving Ukraine as the only former Soviet republic still considering the disarmament pact. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and its protocols require Belarus to surrender all 81 of the SS-25 single warhead missiles that it inherited from the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. The parliament approved the disarmament treaty with the United States at a closed session after four hours of debate, a Belarusian Foreign Ministry spokesman told the Associated Press. Belarusian lawmakers also voted to approve the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which forbids the export of nuclear weapons technology, and the so-called Lisbon agreement, which commits Belarus to send its nuclear arms to Russia for dismantling. The parliaments of Russia and Kazakhstan ratified START I last year. The treaty was signed in 1991 by former President George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev. If ratified by Ukraine, the treaty would leave Russia as the only one of the four with nuclear weapons. It also would make deep cuts in the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia. Ukraine, while insisting that it wants to be nuclear-free, has thus far balked at ratifying the treaty, demanding security guarantees and \$1.5 billion in compensation for the West.

Hong Kong governor leaves hospital

HONG KONG (AP) — Governor Chris Patten checked out of a hospital Friday following a rapid recovery from an operation to treat two narrowing coronary arteries, doctors said. Mr. Patten, who looked somewhat subdued, thanked the staff at Queen Mary Hospital for getting him through the operation Wednesday to dilate the arteries using balloon catheters. Doctors said Mr. Patten, who left two days earlier than expected, was in good condition and would require about a week of rest at home before returning to work. In medical terms, Mr. Patten, 48, underwent percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty. His ailment is common to people who smoke, enjoy high cholesterol diets, or suffer from high blood pressure. Doctors say 30 per cent of patients who undergo the operation suffer a relapse within six months. As a result, Mr. Patten has been advised to take it easy and change his diet.

U.S. Senate backs compromise on gays

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. Senate Thursday backed President Bill Clinton's compromise to delay lifting a ban against homosexuals in the military for six months, but made no promise to lift the ban even then. It approved by a vote of 62-37 a compromise resolutions rejecting an opposition Republican plan to instead ban gays from the military by law for six months. Only five senators declared support for Mr. Clinton's plan to eventually allow gays and lesbians in the military during a four-hour debate.

Fighting continues in Angolan interior

LUANDA (R) — Fighting raged in the Angolan provinces, including an attack on Huambo in which 30 UNITA soldiers were killed, state radio and media said Friday.

Water was restored in the capital Luanda, where rebels sabotaged the main waterworks two weeks ago, but elsewhere there was no apparent let up in the fighting which resumed when UNITA rejected U.N.-supervised elections held last year.

The radio reported clashes in six provinces across the vast southwest African country, including the elimination of a UNITA rebel company in Huambo, the guerrillas' central highlands headquarters.

The radio said many rebels fled the scene, leaving behind an assortment of weapons.

The radio also reported fighting in central Benguela province, where the government says its forces resisted UNITA attacks in Caibambo and Chongoror after several hours of fierce battles Thursday.

Intense artillery attacks by rebels advancing towards the airport in Kuito, capital of central Bie province, sent panicked residents fleeing from their homes, the radio said.

In eastern Luena, the government launched clean-up operations against the rebels.

In southern Namibe province, UNITA men in civilian dress looted houses for food and livestock while in northern Malanje small bands of guerrillas planted mines around various towns, the state-run Jornal De Angola said.

The reports, which could not be independently verified, came as water was restored to most parts of Luanda.

U.N. fails to win Haitian approval for observers

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — A U.N. negotiator has failed in the latest effort to restore democracy in Haiti, and a prominent government foe said talks ended with the envoy being showered with insults.

The military-backed leadership refused to budge in its rejection of a proposed international observer mission, Haitian politicians and foreign diplomats said.

U.N. representative Dante Caputo spent three days in intensive but fruitless talks with Prime Minister Marc Bazin said the army command, trying to open a wedge toward returning ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Evans Paul, former mayor of Port-Au-Prince and a supporter of Mr. Aristide, said Mr. Caputo told him members of Mr. Bazin's negotiating team insulted him, calling him "an imperialist" and a "dirty" foreigner. Mr. Paul said the negotiations broke up in an angry exchange.

He described Mr. Caputo as "withdrawn and shocked."

"He said he could not come to

terms with the regime in power," Mr. Paul told the Associated Press.

Pro-military demonstrators jeered Mr. Caputo, a former Argentine foreign minister, when he arrived Monday.

Mr. Caputo left for New York to report to the United Nations, which is considering harsher sanctions on the impoverished Caribbean nation if it failed to agree to the observers.

Mr. Bazin last week rejected U.N. plans for a mission of about 500 civilians who would fan out across Haiti to help establish order. He called it a violation of sovereignty.

According to foreign diplomats, Mr. Bazin insisted the powers and size of the mission be reduced. He also asked for an end to the hemisphere-wide trade embargo in exchange for clearance for the mission, the diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The army overthrew Mr. Aristide, Haiti's first freely elected president, in a bloody September

1991 coup. The army seems the observer mission as a vanguard for possible foreign intervention and forced reinstatement of Mr. Aristide.

Mr. Bazin, a former World Bank official, was considered a moderate by the army and Haiti's elite and was portrayed as Washington's candidate in the election he lost to Mr. Aristide in 1990.

The army hoped his appointment in June would influence Washington to help lift the embargo imposed by the Organisation of American States after the coup. The embargo remains, but is easily breached.

Far-right politicians say Mr. Bazin should be dismissed if he accepts an agreement that may lead to a civilian observer force or Mr. Aristide's return.

The far right suggests former Interim President Joseph Nerette or another politician beholden to the military could step into the job.

Privately, international officials have been wary of uncon-

ditional support for Mr. Aristide. The radical Roman Catholic priest, hugely popular among Haiti's poor, was slow to criticise mob violence against soldiers, private police and collaborators of the 29-year Duvalier family dictatorship.

His supporters say military brutality provokes such violence and that an observer force that will protect everyone is the best way to keep the peace.

Rep. Charles Rangel of New York urged President Bill Clinton to meet with Mr. Aristide and come up with an outline to bring back democracy.

"I think it's time for the president of the United States to really speak out," he said in a telephone interview. "Clinton's missing a great opportunity by keeping silent. This issue goes far beyond the refugees, to the people in Haiti, and they need to know that help is on the way."

After sham elections on Jan. 18, new pro-Bazin senators took office Sunday, enabling him to block any agreement he finds unfavourable.

COLUMN

Billy Crystal named to host Academy Awards

LOS ANGELES (R) — Comedian Billy Crystal was named Thursday to host next month's 65th annual Academy Awards, the fourth straight year he will head the show. "Billy is the perfect host," Academy Awards show producer Gilbert Cates said in a statement. "He is a major movie star with a talent for moving the evening's entertainment along. I am honoured and excited to be hosting the Oscars for the fourth time," Crystal said. He won one Emmy Award for hosting the Academy Awards two years ago and another was one of the show's writers. The Oscars, which honour the best of the past year's films, actors and directors, will be presented on March 29 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Los Angeles Music Centre and will be televised live on ABC.

Japanese, German men 'most unromantic'

TOKYO (AP) — As Feb. 14 approaches, German and Japanese men have just received a very un-Valentine's-like slap in the face from their own wives. A ranking among the world's least romantic men. When women in 14 countries were asked to rate how "romantic" their mates are, German men ended in 12th place and Japanese next to last, behind only Poland. On a scale of one to 11, Japanese women gave their men an average 4.54 in sexiness and 5.11 in charm — both dead last. German men, meanwhile, proved to be the bottom in kindness, with a full — per cent giving their mates the lowest possible ranking. The unromantic results were reported by Harlequin, the Toronto-based publisher of Romance novels, in a survey of 5,112 women released here last week. On the more positive side, Greek men received top overall rankings for being charming, considerate and sexy. They apparently got to the top by starting out on the right foot: 73 per cent still remember their first date with their partner, tops in the survey. The main problem for Japanese and Germans appeared to be the lack of romantic touch — for example, taking one's spouse for a romantic weekend getaway. Only 23 per cent of Japanese men did so, compared with 62 per cent of the passionate Greeks. Germans and Japanese also finished last and next-to-last in treating their wives to a dinner for two. Communications problems also might be behind Japanese men's woes. Only 34 per cent ever tell their mates, "I love you" outside of the bedroom, well below next-to-last Poland's 51 per cent.

Meryl Streep gets award

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Meryl Streep has been awarded the 1993 Rungstedlund Prize, named after the home of Karen Blixen, the writer she played in the movie *Out of Africa*. Royalties from the film, which won an Academy Award in 1985, and the ensuing interest in Ms. Blixen's works enabled the Rungstedlund Foundation to open the late writer's birthplace as a museum in 1991. The museum curator, Marianne Asmusen, said that Ms. Streep was awarded the prize from "her remarkable artistic works and especially her personal interpretation of Karen Blixen" in the movie. The American actress is the first foreigner to receive the prize, worth \$3,900. Ms. Streep will receive the award when she visits Denmark in March for filming of Chilean novelist Isabel Allende's best seller *The House of the Spirits*, being shot in Denmark and Portugal. Ms. Asmusen said.

Knight gets his maiden

HIGHTSTOWN, N.J. (AP) — It wasn't the weight of love in James Toto's heart that caused his horse to throw him twice as he rode to an elementary school to propose to his lady love. It was the weight — and sight — of his silver armour, red cape and long sword that spooked Toto's steed. Despite the unceremonious start and a cut on his hand resulting from the falls, the 23-year-old East Windsor knight managed to make it across the yard at the Walter C. Black School to propose to Athena Katsifis, 24, a fourth-grade teacher. Carrying a diamond engagement ring in a soft leather pouch around his neck, Toto arrived at Katsifis' room just as guest speaker Thomas Lombardi finished a lecture about the age of chivalry.